

Divided into Stands, Together they Fall: A critical analysis of salvage logging the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest

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## ABSTRACT

This research takes elements of the scholarship on environmentalism – political theory and ethical philosophy – and evaluates them together in the context of the conflict over salvage logging in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest in Oregon. I tell the story of the conflict through a history of land and fire management in the U.S. Through a closely detailed account of the anti-salvage logging activism, I explore the gap between ethics and political responsibility and how they unfold in this battle against deforestation. This research offers an in-depth look into how the environmental movement struggled internally to identify goals, and to challenge powerful economic and political systems that prevent significant change from taking root. I argue that the environmental movement needs a theory of environmental responsibility as a framework by which to better understand the strategies and complexities of environmental conflicts. The task of environmental responsibility is to confront the challenge of how to make the environmental movement responsive to the political and economic conditions that produce conflicts, and how environmentalism can overcome the limits of liberal individualism. As forests continue to dwindle, and as activists across the nation mobilize to stop the Keystone XL pipeline that will carry Canadian tar sands to the Gulf of Mexico, the future of environmentalism has never been more critical.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This research examines the political conflict that surrounded the post-fire logging decisions in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, and how this conflict enables an analysis of the theoretical and practical gap between environmental ethics and environmental politics. I argue that environmental ethics does not fully account for why people take up environmentalism. However, environmental politics and the range of political concerns bound up with environmentalism, from anti-capitalism to social justice, is not simply a matter of stakeholders defending their material needs. I take up my analysis in this gap between the politics and ethics of environmentalism. I argue that the environmental movement has historically struggled to connect its theoretical goals (systemic change, justice, anti-colonialism) with its ethical concerns because environmentalism does not have a strong grasp on what responsibility means to the movement. I offer the concept of environmental responsibility as a theoretical starting point to addressing these concerns. To better explore this disjuncture between ethics and politics, I look to a well-known and highly publicized environmental conflict over salvage logging in the forest of southern Oregon. This case study, along with interviews from former activists involved in fighting the logging sales, will reveal the tension between environmental ethics and political strategy within the environmental movement, and why environmentalism needs to consider responsibility more so than ethics.

The story began in 2002, when the Biscuit fire ripped through wilderness areas, protected botanical areas, and tree farms. Shortly after the fire, the Forest Service announced it would auction sites for salvage logging that were in previously protected roadless areas (FEIS 2004). Environmentalists descended on the Rogue-Siskiyou

National Forest to speak out against the sales, to prevent logging trucks from accessing the sites, and to file lawsuits both to interrupt and to end the sales and logging projects. The anti-salvage logging movement was both in-line with previous forest defense efforts and particular to its own political and ecological context. Tensions between the government, private interests, and activists precluded negotiation and mutual respect. In the end, the logging sites in question were sold to regional timber companies and salvage logged. Nearly all of the lawsuits filed against the Forest Service were dismissed, and many exhausted and bitterly disappointed environmentalists dropped out of direct action and radical organizing altogether (Interview data, subjects 1 & 6, 2012).

To tell the story of the Biscuit fire dispute, I analyze the political, economic, and ecological context in which this conflict took place. Towards those ends, I provide a history of forest and fire management policy in the United States, and evaluate the changes in forestry that took place over the last century. Within this history, I argue that the logging conflict and the positions taken up therein do not just address the specific salvage sales; the conflict is also about radically different ontological views of the forest, as well as over the political approaches to dissent. The dissertation connects a theoretical framework with the on-the-ground story of the conflict. To do this, I identify ethical philosophies that were reflected in the positions taken up by environmentalists, and I engage political economic theories that help to explain the logic of commodification that dominated policy and decision-making. I look at what happened when these ethical positions were taken up as the basis for political actions and what these political actions did or did not do. The purpose of this research is to examine the gap between environmental ethics and environmental politics, how these findings can generate new

and relevant conclusions about the fire controversy for the future management of this forest, and how these findings can contribute to understanding what it takes to build a successful intervention in natural resource conflicts.

## **Research Objectives and Questions**

### **Research Questions**

- 1.) How does environmental ethics inform political action?
- 2.) What does political responsibility look like in the environmental movement?
- 3.) What are the contributions of this dissertation to evaluating ethics and responsibility in the environment movement and in natural resource conflict management?

This research pursues three primary research questions. The first two explore the relationship between ethics and politics in environmentalism. Environmentalism sits at the crossroads of these two sets of concepts. The first, ethics, emerges from an ontological perspective of the environment, and directs what the proper relationship should be between humans and nature. When these ethical sentiments or guidelines are violated, environmentalists mobilize their ontological perspectives into epistemological approaches and develop political strategy in order to address the ethical violation. In this movement between ethics and politics, compromise between other entities and among an environmentalist's own preferences tell the story of environmental conflicts where the abstractions of ethics and political theory cannot account for the specificity of context.

If ethics are not the only reason for and influence over political action, what, then, drives political responsibility in the environmental movement? Why did so many organizations intervene in the post-fire salvage logging decision, and how did they manage their own ethical and political needs? Finally, what does the story of the Biscuit

fire contribute towards evaluating modern environmentalism and natural resource conflicts? While the research is focused on the specific case, and limits analysis to this particular issue, it provides a framework for analyzing place-based cases. The Biscuit reveals how environmentalists behave together, how much diversity exists within a single movement, the tension between their ethical perspectives and their political actions, and how the administration of public participation and conflict resolution severely limits the range of available solutions.

### **Research Objectives**

My research seeks to contribute to the field of environmental political theory, environmental and forest management policy, and more broadly to environmentalism by doing the following:

- 1.) To interrogate the concept of environmental ethics and how ethics relates to politics when these concepts, assumptions, and actions are confronted with pressing environmental crises.
- 2.) To examine deforestation in the Pacific Northwest through the lenses of environmental economy, environmental politics, and environmental ethics. These three lenses are often used one at a time to analyze environmental crises and controversies. I argue that these three frameworks must be taken together to understand the complexity and implications of the political, economic, and social effects of deforestation and salvage logging in the Pacific Northwest.
- 3.) To offer a critique of the logic and mechanisms of industrial capitalism (and increasingly post-industrial capitalism) as a mediator of the material human/forest relationship. I argue that while environmental ethicists often ask interesting and important

questions about the ontology of nature and the relationship between humans and nature, it does not adequately explain political preferences, actions, and the way people take responsibility for environmental protection. To understand natural resource conflicts, and to ask what lessons can be applied to the future of environmentalism, these cases need to be analyzed within a framework of political ecology, rather than one of ethics.

### **Research Context: Climate Change, Wildfires, and Policy Conflict**

In the summer of 2012, Colorado and New Mexico had record-breaking wildfires. It is the summer of 2013, and the season's first fires imply another stretch of intense conflagrations. While the western United States does not have a tornado or hurricane season, it does have a fire season, typically spanning late-June through September. Alongside the familiar fire season headlines of ravaged view sheds and evacuated communities, there's a new conversation: Mainstream media is now linking fire seasons to climate change. Forest scientist and environmental activist Timothy Ingalsbee (2010) made the following observation: "While currently 6-8 million acres defines a 'bad' fire season, experts predict an average 10-12 million acres will burn annually in the near future primarily under the impact of global warming" (Ingalsbee 2010, p.4). He further explained how global climate change impacts forest fires:

Global warming and climate change are affecting all regions of the planet in several different ways, but in many areas of the West, climate change is causing earlier snowmelts in spring, later rains in fall, lighter snows in winter, and warmer, drier temperatures in summer. All of these changes in weather have combined to create a lengthier time that fuels are available to burn, resulting in longer fire seasons, and more extreme fire behavior. Ongoing climate change is

also predicted to cause an increase in severe fire weather and extreme storm events that will bring both abundant lightning and high winds to start and spread wildfires. Indeed, the Forest Service's 2009 Quadrennial Fire Review now predicts that the effects of global warming and climate change will result in 10-12 million acres burning annually in the U.S. (p.13).

As forestry science points to an irreversible trend of increasing wildfires, the need to discuss approaches to fire management will intensify. These conversations cannot happen behind closed doors among private interests and governmental agencies; they need to happen in public, and with a greater diversity of forestry science perspectives than is currently guiding forest policy.

The symbolism of the western wildfire has expanded beyond the common discourses of destruction and threat. It is a warning shot, a reality check that life, as we know it, and forests as we know them, are fundamentally changing. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, speculation about a relationship between global warming and the force of the storm was considered controversial. Just 6 years later, the Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell and the Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Harris Sherman, have publicly linked climate change to the longer and more destructive fire season (Kenworthy 2012). Such largely uncontroversial characters whose administrative homes are rooted in the science, not just the politics, of climate change, have added a new dimension to the discourse of forest fires. From the New York Times to CNN, news outlets warn that the increase in frequency and intensity is more than an unusually destructive fire season; it is a new normal as the planet crosses from anticipating the specter of climate change to the reality of a climate, changed. In light of

the recent national attention given to forest fires, this dissertation is tasked with more than making linkages among various political theories and environmental realities. It attempts to directly confronting what political responsibility means in the face of forest fires as an urgent message of a rapidly changing planet.

While the driving force behind this work has always been to pick at tensions between environmental ethics and political responsibility, this particularly voracious fire season, and the changes to forests it implies, makes the work of thinking through the history of the biopolitical management of forests all the more pressing. This work asserts that missing in the conversation about wildfires and climate change is an indictment of the economic system that has immeasurably contributed to the climate crisis. How environmental movements should respond to the consequences of the capitalist consumption of forests is an open question. Various elements of environmentalism have different ontological and ethical assumptions about the forest that guide their views and subsequent political action. These ethical frameworks do not always produce political actions that stop, in the short term or in the long term, deforestation. In focusing on the gap between environmental ethics and applied environmental politics, I hope to illuminate how environmentalism plays out, and what lessons can inform the future of environmentalism as it continues to respond to a changing climate and political inertia.

### **Why Deforestation?**

I begin my research with the acceptance of the global environmental crisis, which I recognize as a series of ecosystem tipping points, in large part agitated by industrialism, capitalist production, and the irresponsible consumption of the environment, which cause socially and ecologically dangerous conditions for present and future life on earth. One of

the most critical ecosystems to life on earth are forests. Forests serve several vital functions. They act as the world's largest carbon sinks and are considered the "lungs of the earth" because of their ability to purify air and exhale oxygen. Forests are critical habitat to countless species and sub-species, including millions of humans who either live in forest dwelling communities or are economically dependent on forests. Forests form the basis of watersheds, produce and stabilize topsoil, and have countless uses as medicine, food, fiber, and building material for humans and non-humans ("United Nations Year of the Forest"). One of the places where forests are most part of the cultural and economic fabric is the Pacific Northwest in the United States, where forests have long characterized the wild and untamed west, have been the stuff of legend, and have dramatically shaped how land and people settled, colonized the region, and developed locally and nationally over time. The sheer density of Pacific Northwest old growth forests give the impression of an unending supply of raw materials for a timber-based economy, from lumber for housing and eventual urbanization, to wood pulp and particle chips for mass-produced short-lived consumer products. The story of forests in the Pacific Northwest is the story of the commodification of nature and labor, class stratification in the region, and how political, economic, and social life has been forged within the context of forestland.

I focus on deforestation for a few reasons: First, I identify deforestation as a pressing ecological crisis that deserves attention because of the serious impact of forests on global and local environmental stability. Second, studying forests and their social, political, and economic articulations provides observations, analyses, and criticisms that can enrich discussions about how to respond politically to deforestation as an ecological,

social, and economic crisis. Third, exploring the collision of physical nature with socially constructed nature, and the ethical and political responses that mediate the human/nature relationship, needs to be anchored to a real place, time, and ecosystem. Without this grounding, the analysis will fall short of the full complexity of talking about the social and economic construction of nature. While the particular conflict in this study does not speak to all iterations of deforestation, approaching this problem by exploring the possibilities of change on local and regional levels can make an overwhelming, intractable problem comprehensible, and it can open up the range of possibilities for conflict resolution.

## **What Deforestation Is**

Deforestation is a concept, a set of actions, and a site of contestation among the individuals, groups, and institutions that are involved with and impacted by particular forests. Deforestation often takes the form of clearcutting, which, for the sake of brevity, I describe as the practice of cutting multiple trees in a forest to turn them into a commodity. It is an industrial process that uses the most efficient means possible to cut trees, transport them for processing, and introduce them to the market as pulp, fibers, boards, logs, and consumer products like paper. Those who practice deforestation do not just consume individual trees; they consume forests.

Trees are the biological and cultural basis for forests: land can have rivers, grasses, deer, and shrubs, but without trees it is not considered a forest. Industrial tree harvesting is incredibly damaging to the forest ecosystem. Logging requires road building and the heavy equipment used damages and compacts soil, crushes habitats, displaces soil, brush, and other biotic material, damages and blocks streams with the debris created

from the logging process, and fundamentally alters the forest environment (Wuerthner 2006). Deforestation is sometimes followed by reforestation, where the Forest Service spreads seeds of economically valuable trees and manages the growth of other forest species to make sure those with less or no economic value do not choke out the profitable trees. The administration, maintenance, and care of the forest are guided by policies designed for maximizing efficiency and economic value.

Deforestation is a cultural and social event. Forests are not only part of folk stories, religious ceremonies and beliefs, but are also a natural inheritance to those who live in forest-dwelling communities (from indigenous communities to logging communities). Stories about the formation of the United States are bound up with the experiences of the early European explorers in the intimidating stands of the Pacific Northwest. Settling and taming these dark places and realizing their tremendous economic potential are part of the national mythology of the United States. States like Oregon, Washington, and Alaska are culturally, politically, and economically shaped by the presence of forests (White 1995). A forest that is being logged is not always a forest undergoing deforestation, and deforestation has produced economic and social benefits. Logging is fundamental to many of the social and individual identities tied to forest controversies. Although logging is typically considered an administrative and economic question, it is at its roots a normative issue.

A call to restrict logging, and to end clearcutting and deforestation, is not a denial of the material basis of the relationship between humans and forests. I do not argue that forests should be left alone or should somehow be removed entirely from economic and social life. Indigenous communities and European-descended logging communities have

logged forests, engaged in prescribed burns, harvested food, fibers, and medicines, and even replanted trees and plants that were considered more socially beneficial than others. However, these practices reproduced on an industrial scale are too great of a material demand on the forest. Deforestation can be characterized in the following way:

- 1.) As the outcome of poorly regulated logging;
- 2.) As a type of forest management that permits high volume logging because the economic value of trees exceeds the non-economic; and
- 3.) As the realization of capitalist logic that perpetuates a metabolic rift between humans and forests (Foster, Clark & York 2010).

If left unchecked, legal and illegal industrial logging will consume forests so efficiently that they will not be able to reproduce themselves, at least not on any time horizon relevant for several human generations. Deforestation is damaging across the contexts in which it takes place (economic, cultural, political, physical). The demand for trees and the drive for efficient extraction endanger and exploit human labor. Deforestation consumes people, too, through dangerous working conditions and lost identities and practices from those displaced for logging operations.

### **What Deforestation is Not**

Despite my personal opposition to industrial logging, I do not advocate an alternative that suggests humans cannot have a material exchange with the forest. Human intervention in forests is not inherently damaging. Humans have an undeniable material relationship with forests for food, fiber, and medicine, and many cultures and communities maintain spiritual, cultural, and aesthetic connections and practices. Maintaining that relationship includes logging. Decisions about logging must directly

engage with the people whose lives are most immediately affected by the health and presence of the forest. Logging should not be in service to satisfy industrial production but rather to satisfy material needs interpreted outside of the hegemonic discourse of capitalism.

To reach these ends, land managers, timber-dependent communities, and environmentalists active in particular sites of conflict need to consider successful and replicable lessons from Native American land management techniques, and they need to produce land management plans that reflect the endemic qualities of that particular forest and the ecological needs of that place and those living things (see conclusion). While many environmentalists link the end of deforestation to the start of a radically new political and economic system, this may not be a feasible resistance strategy for everyone. Some aspirations for a non-capitalist system can be complimentary to ecologically stable logging, but deforestation requires resistance and solution-making process more responsive to the urgency of the crisis. This requires communities to reevaluate their relationship to industrial logging and deforestation, what they need from the forest, and how they value the forest.

Putting decisions about logging in communities does not guarantee that they will decide to log sustainably or that their needs will be derived from “real” concerns, rather than from the patterns of consumption produced by capitalism and corporate marketing. However, creating spaces in communities for radical democratic practices, engaging loggers and producers as more than saws for hire, and making logging decisions a conscious community effort, rather than an imposed condition on the forest from corporate demand, can slow deforestation and invigorate conversations about the material

relationship to forests. To explore the complexities of deforestation as an ethical, political, and economic dilemma, I first build a theoretical framework to help understand the macro-level economic and political conditions that frame this, and many other, logging controversies. I also consider the ethical frameworks held by many of the environmentalists who responded to the post-fire logging controversy, and how the controversy itself unfolded in the gap between ethics and politics.

### **An Introduction to the Case Study**

The story of the fire and the subsequent political responses to the fire is the subject of the rest of the study. A detailed description of the fire itself can be found in chapter 4. Here, I focus on why I chose this particular case, and what uses it has for political ecology and the study of environmentalism. This study provides a close examination of a particular environmental conflict. Deforestation takes on the particular characteristics of the place in which it occurs. The history, social identities, economies, and politics of a site of deforestation make it impossible to generalize what deforestation looks like all of the time everywhere. The Pacific Northwest's rich history of exploration, forest-dwelling communities, and logging economies give deforestation in this example its texture. Capitalism, the state, and citizenship are found in the way public policy impacts these forests, and environmentalism is similarly shaped by these contexts. While this particular case cannot be generalized to explain the interactions between state, private interests, public, and ecology, this case enlivens the philosophies and politics that cannot on their own explain environmental degradation and why environmentalism has not overcome the power of capitalism.

The Biscuit post-fire logging controversy is still relevant, and important, for several reasons. The fire was one of the most destructive and high profile in Oregon state history. It left an indelible mark on the land and people, from the towns surrounding the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest to Portland, hundreds of miles away from the smoke and flame. The fire ushered in the arrival of Bush administration forest and fire policy, which marked an important set of changes in public policy (see chapters 2, 3, and 4). The controversial logging sales were not exclusively about those specific sites; the sales became points of conflict and debate between interests that had long been feuding over political and philosophical control over the remaining old growth in Oregon. The controversy revealed the modern incarnation of the long-standing sympathetic relationships between timber interests, government agencies like the Forest Service, and forestry science. Although environmentalists have been wary of these relationships for a long time, the Biscuit fire opened a view into the inner workings of these relations, and how those impacted the fate of the forest. The case study is analyzed with support from several important works from environmental ethics, environmental political theory, and political economy.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Environmental Ethics**

When I talk about environmental ethics, I am talking about a logically derived set of principles or ideas that guide individual or group behavior. Ethics is distinct from morals or a “gut” response to an event or phenomenon, or simply the maintenance of social and cultural norms. Ethics is the construction of a conceptual framework to make sense of phenomena and how the individual or a collectivity should respond. Ethics

assumes there is a right or wrong way to respond to phenomena, and how to act or react to other humans or non-humans is in part determined by how “the other” is valued and what kinds of actions are aligned with a particular set of values. Ethics can describe the right set of principles by which individuals should act in response to events, it can describe the best possible outcome, and it can require actions that produce the right outcome, rather than actions that adhere to the right principles.

J.B. Callicott suggested that at its base, environmental ethics governs what humans can and cannot do to the environment. Concern for the environment can be anthropocentric with a focus on the economic impact to people and their standard of living, or concern can be biocentric or ecocentric, which recognizes the intrinsic value of the environment as well as its unquantifiable utility. Callicott (1979) based his environmental ethical consideration on Aldo Leopold’s seminal work *The Sand County Almanac* (1986). Aldo stated:

(i) All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts; (ii) An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from antisocial conduct. These are two definitions of the same thing. The thing has its origin in the tendency of interdependent individuals or groups to evolve modes of cooperation (p.72-73).

Callicott, through Leopold, recognized that an environmental ethics is less a strict boundary between humans and nature than a set of guidelines and principles by which humans can act responsibly as part of the interdependent relationship with the planet of which they are undeniably part. Although non-human aspects of the biotic community

don't follow the same ethical guidelines that people might, and they might not recognize mutual obligation or fairness, this should not inhibit humans from giving ethical regard to the biotic community (Callicott 1979, p. 79). For Leopold, environmental ethics did not require more sophistication than this: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Callicott 1979, p.79). Though it predates deep ecology and social ecology, Leopold's ethical position displays elements of both of them. While Leopold and Callicott viewed nature as a dynamic whole deserving of the ethical regard ordinarily reserved for human-to-human relations, this view has narrow application in political action.

In addition to reflecting on how humans should regard others, the study of environmental ethics spends considerable energy debating where to locate the value of the environment and its constituent parts. Does nature have intrinsic value? If one can argue for the intrinsic value of a forest, can one also argue for the intrinsic value of a single element of that forest, like a patch of lichen? Does the lichen carry as much ethical weight as an endangered species? Is it of equal importance to the economic stability of timber-dependent communities? These questions of intrinsic and extrinsic values, and the application of these values, alongside questions of fairness and duty, drive environmental philosophy. Some modern environmental philosophers are working on the bridge between ethics and politics, like Timothy Hayward (Political Theory and Environmental Values, 1998) and Steven Vanderheiden (Atmospheric Justice, 2009). Their works evaluate how ethics can be applied to specific environmental crises, like carbon emissions. In his essay *Why Taking the Climate Challenge Seriously Means Taking*

*Democracy More Seriously*, Hayward (2013) argued that democracy in the United States is required to deal with deferring benefits, considering future generations, and making sacrifices. These requests are typically unpopular among the public, and as long as that remains true, there is little hope that individuals will make radical lifestyle changes in time to substantially bypass the impacts of global climate change.

Instead, Hayward suggested that environmental values become part of the constitution and therefore a compulsory part of the formula for political decision-making. Because environmental concerns like clean air and water can be considered basic human rights, the language of environmentalism could be reimagined as a right and a duty, rather than a luxury and a counter-culture lifestyle. He concluded with a call for environmental citizenship, not unlike Andrew Dobson's argument for the global ecological citizen (Dryzek 2010). Environmental citizenship can move people to think about environmentalism the same way they might think of voting and other forms of public engagement and responsibility. These are strong ideas, but detailed analysis of the practice of environmentalism, and how environmental conflicts unfold, can strengthen the practical potential of these recommendations. As Hayward has pointed out in his own essays, environmental philosophy is often confined to abstraction or limited examples from real environmental issues (Hayward 2013). To make environmental ethics more relevant to the politics of a changing environment, ethics will need to be evaluated as they are practiced through environmental conflicts.

I argue that environmental ethics is critical to the process of identifying environmental problems and connecting those to the overarching climate crisis. This aside, I ask why these ethical frameworks fail to fully account for the role of capitalism in

creating and exacerbating environmental crises, and why ethics does not successfully enable political action that directly confronts capitalism, or extensively overhauls public land management. To engage these questions, I work within some key theoretical frameworks to highlight the interconnectivity among environmental ethics, politics, and economics. Ethics needs to be more directly informed by political and economic conditions in order to produce more powerful political responses to environmental crises. Environmental ethics directed at an economic system at odds with environment health and which produces poor human/nature relationships could help produce a politics that directly engages with root problems of the ecological crisis. I elaborate on this critique of ethics in environmentalism in chapter 5.

What follows is an overview of environmental ethical perspectives found in the background assumptions at work in the Biscuit activism. Not all environmentalist perspectives fit into these categories, but they provide some structure for thinking about generalized views that are part of the public discourse and political action in response to environmental problems. This is not a comprehensive literature review for environmental perspectives. Rather, I highlight perspectives especially significant to understanding the environmentalists who form part of the case study. Each of these perspectives was taken up by the organizations that most directly responded to the Biscuit post-fire salvage logging controversy. The local configurations of these dominant discourses are found in other local environmental controversies, and can illuminate how environmental theories and philosophies take shape in public values and public policy.

### ***Mainstream Environmental Ethics***

Although the history of environmentalism in the United States deserves a more thorough introduction, I start with the kind of environmentalism ushered in by land conservation organizations that formed and politicized in the 1920s through the 1960s. In brief, environmentalism grew out of wilderness conservation groups like The Wilderness Society and The Audubon Society, which achieved a significant policy win with The Wilderness Protection Act of 1964. In the body of this legislation, the environment was regarded as a spiritual and aesthetic public good, in addition to its utility for scientific research and recreation. This combination of anthropocentric and ecocentric values helped bring ideas like stewardship, conservation, and care into the human / nature relationship. In the 1970s the Nixon administration passed landmark pieces of legislation like the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, and the Environmental Protection Agency was formed under his administration (Gottlieb 2007). As environmentalism found its way into the mandates of the federal government, groups of people began grassroots organizing to protest social and environmental justice issues, like Love Canal in the late 1970s. Environmentalism that grew out of this era primarily sought to keep industries and politicians in-line with environmental law. Letter writing to Congressional representatives and peaceful demonstrations became the norm for environmentalism.

The 1970s also produced a new kind of environmental activism, one with a history in the animal liberation movement in Great Britain and in the counter-culture like Edward Abbey and Dave Foreman. Inspired by environmental thought like Leopold's land ethic, and anarchism, Abbey wrote the influential *Monkeywrench Gang* in 1975, following a group of friends who used eco-sabotage techniques termed "monkeywrenching" to interfere with environmentally destructive projects (Luke 2007).

Abbey, Earth First!, and other direct action and anti-capitalist organizations did not catch on as mainstream perspectives or strategies, as their sometimes illegal tactics from road blockades to tampering with earth moving equipment were not the means of everyday activism. Instead, environmentalism in the mainstream took to ecological modernization and what would later be termed “green capitalism”.

Modern environmentalism’s premises respond to the gloomy warnings of overconsumption, over population, and of an apocalyptic future prevalent in the 1970s (Meadows 1972; Brower & Ehrlich 1968). Green capitalism or the “natural capitalism” coined by Paul Hawken and the Lovinses of the Rocky Mountain Institute argued that capitalism is not driving environmental destruction; outdated industrial and production processes are the source of ecological pressure. Rather than push against the economic system, producers and consumers can work within the system to make it more efficient and to deliver the right goods at the right time (Hawken, Lovins & Lovins 2008). These approaches do not directly engage ethics or call for collective action. Instead, natural capitalism speaks to producers to make changes to their facilities, production, and oversight at the end of a product’s life (McDonough & Braungart 2002). The new industrial revolution fully embraces the efficiencies of capitalism, and simply increases the economic value of the environment without problematizing the system of extrinsic value. This variety of environmentalism promises to improve the general quality of life, make efficient the use of resources to minimize the risks of overuse and ecological disruption, and to boost the economy by providing jobs and cutting production costs.

Despite warnings from environmental philosophy that a tyranny of the majority will prioritize short-term needs over a long-term perspective (Hayward 2013), natural

capitalism is vaguely ethical and mostly a post-political response that considers organizing around specific issues and calls to redefine the human/nature relationship as anachronistic. Consuming the right products in the right way is good ecological citizenship, and individual responsibility is connected to being economically productive and consumptive. Leopold's bottom line that environmentally degrading activities are unethical might be considered resolved in the supposedly lighter touch of green industrialism. The ideas are pragmatic, but fail to question the economic system which, through its many iterations since the rapid deforestation of the American Northeast in the 1800s and the Southeast in the 1900s, has systematically degraded and destabilized all reaches of the natural environment. Natural capitalism is not a solution shaped by Leopold's ethics. What's more, it reifies the discourses of commodification about which political theorists have warned from Neil Smith (2008) to Karl Marx (2010) to Karl Polanyi (2001). The growing popularity of these solutions is reflected in the mission and goals of major environmental non-profit organizations, which act as information clearinghouses and provides guidelines for ecological citizenship for many people in the United States.

Not all iterations of mainstream environmentalism are so enthusiastic about the green potential of capitalism. Many have a more direct connection to environmental ethics. The Sierra Club missions statement is printed as: "To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives" ("Stand with the Planet" 2013) and The Wilderness Society simply

states their mission is to protect wilderness (“Wilderness Society”). Both of these organizations include care, duty, and responsibility in their missions, although they do not specify how those are to be practiced, or what nature or wilderness is beyond a sum of all ecosystems and a “special place” that deserves our care. Their campaigns offer benefits from halting land degradation to energy security (“Welcome to the Sierra Club”).

Membership is usually a call to donate money to their campaigns, and some groups, including The Sierra Club, incentivize membership by offering deals with their corporate partners like Travelocity and Whirlpool home appliances (“Welcome to the Sierra Club”). Travelocity, an outlet for airline tickets and hotels, hardly promotes a green lifestyle of carbon emissions-intensive travel, while Whirlpool redirects civic engagement to “responsible consumption” and the assurance that a middle class standard of living won’t be threatened by environmentalism. In a surprising departure from its history of making change through the policy process, in 2013 the Sierra Club lifted its ban on civil disobedience because it believes the climate change crisis is too dangerous and too urgent to limit civic engagement to passive forms of activism (“Stand with the Planet” 2013). However, it, like many other organizations similar in issue areas and size, still embraces change from within the political and administrative system, and asks citizens to do the same. While there is some utility to these approaches, this use of environmental ethics does very little to address the economic and political conditions that produce the environmental degradation these organizations address. Consequently, environmental ethics remains locked to the search for the “right” ontology of nature and is taken up as part of feel-good mission statements that encourage the status quo.

None of these approaches uses environmental ethics as a jumping off point for a serious analysis of environmental crises as a symptom of the commodification of nature within a capitalist system. Environmental ethics needs to be explicitly aimed at capitalism as a system that produces unhealthy human/nature relationships, profit-motivated assumptions about the value of nature, and the institutions and practices that produce environmental crises. In the case study of deforestation in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, many of the regional and national environmental organizations navigated the spaces between mainstream environmentalism, their own deep connection to the forest, and the direct action activism that confronted their own preferences to work within the system. Indeed, many individual activists whom I interviewed reflected non-mainstream philosophies. Some ethical perspectives have responded to this “shallow” version of environmentalism and connect ethics to a radically egalitarian relationship between humans and nature.

### ***Deep Ecology***

In the 1980s the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess promoted a way of conceptualizing the relationship between humans and nature. He endeavored to dispense with what he saw as the paternalistic model of stewardship that had been the foundation of the mainstream environmentalist movement in the United States (Naess 1993). His work included aspects of John Muir’s wonderment at the place of humans in the universe, and has strong affinities with this excerpt from Muir’s “A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf” (1916):

Now, it never seems to occur to these far- seeing teachers that Nature's object in making animals and plants might possibly be first of all the happiness of each one

of them, not the creation of all for the happiness of one. Why should man value himself as more than a small part of the one great unit of creation? And what creature of all that the Lord has taken the pains to make is not essential to the completeness of that unit - the cosmos? The universe would be incomplete without man; but it would also be incomplete without the smallest transmicroscopic creature that dwells beyond our conceitful eyes and knowledge

(p.138-139)

Naess rejected Muir's Christianity and attribution of nature to God's work, but he took into deep ecology the belief that people have no basis for assigning themselves a privileged role above other living things. Without considering people inconsequential, Muir, and later Naess, would imagine a network of interdependence, rather than a natural hierarchy. Mainstream environmentalism maintained an ontological distance between humans and nature by focusing on public policies to regulate the relationship between capitalism and natural resources, and by creating institutional processes for identifying and protecting wilderness from land that was already despoiled. Naess criticized mainstream environmentalism as "shallow ecology," or ecology that focused on superficial remedies to environmental crises. Naess was critical of environmentalism that believed that nature and the economy could both benefit from the same sets of policies.

Naess' philosophy was deep ecology. Deep ecology eliminated the ontological divide between humans and nature. Without a divide that maintained human superiority over nature, it would be impossible to argue for prioritizing human needs over nature's needs. Absent a hierarchical relationship, individuals would have to consciously decide how and why they would impact other parts of the environment to satisfy their needs.

Deep ecology views nature as intrinsically valuable. Humans have no right to reduce biodiversity, and can only take from nature what is socially necessary (Naess 1993). To determine what is socially necessary, needs would have to be wildly reconsidered.

A modern organization that supported deep ecology would not likely have a partnership with corporations that supported false needs, like Travelocity and The Sierra Club. In the absence of the ontological divide, humans must reconsider the boundaries of the self. To expand the self, humans needed to engage in a deeply empathetic relationship with non-humans, achievable by extending the concept of the self to others. If humans could experience themselves as radically interconnected with all other beings, then the urge towards self-protection would include protecting others (Fox 1995). Decisions about when to create disruption or death in nature would be governed by survival rather than the false needs of a consumer society. Radical interconnection and the extension of the self doesn't mean interpreting non-humans as humans and anthropomorphizing nature, but rather communicating with the natural world while remaining cognizant of epistemological boundaries, like the inability of some non-humans to verbally communicate, without letting these barriers become ontological boundaries.

One of my criticisms of deep ecology is that it does not directly engage with the crisis of capitalism. It does not have specific ideas about how the ethics of a collapsed human/nature relationship can either exist within a capitalism system or how it confronts environmental destruction with more than a new way to orient the idea of the self to the idea of nature. Unlike Marxian political theory, which reads political phenomenon through historical specificity (Smith 2008), deep ecology is historically ambiguous. To suggest that a deep ecology ethic would have resolved the logging conflict in the Rogue-

Siskiyou National Forest would be to ignore the social identity of the logger, the economic conditions in which loggers and others in timber-dependent communities found themselves, and implausibility of the timber companies that bought the salvage logging sales to stop viewing forests as business.

My interviews with former Biscuit fire activists disclosed a disposition towards viewing the forest as part of one's identity, intrinsically valuable, and worth fighting for on its ecological and aesthetic merits. However, the same interviews revealed that many activists were hesitant to base their political strategies on this very sentiment, for fear it would not resonate with the public, or with the private and governmental organizations with which they would have to negotiate (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). While deep ecology influenced the ontological base for those involved in political intervention, it is not sufficient to explain the conditions for environmental degradation, or sufficient as a template for political action and subsequent land management approaches. A more modern perspective that attempts to connect philosophy with politics is poststructural ecology. This view rejects deep ecology as well as natural capitalism. It is found in the subtext of the Biscuit fire controversy, and can help understand how activists worked together and if there are lessons from this view that might make it possible to build into a new environmental politics a new, environmentally responsible, ontological position.

### ***Poststructural Ecology***

Timothy Morton wrote *The Ecological Thought* (2010) as a way to think about the human/nature relationship in the absence of the binary distinction, but without extension of selfhood from deep ecology. Morton also dispensed with the ontological divide between humans and nature, but for different reasons than Naess. Morton posited

that there is no way to determine what is human from what is not. In an argument that has affinities with Donna Haraway's cyborg theory, humans are not somehow sealed off, physically or psychologically, from the world (Haraway 1990). There is no human that is not constituted by billions of non-humans living, reproducing, and working tirelessly in their bodies to keep them (and themselves) alive. There is no single human self or subjectivity that is distinct from other subjectivities in the world. The concept of the non-self borrows from Lacanian psychoanalytics. Morton collapsed the separation between humans and nature, but does not assume that people have full knowledge of nature, or that they should see nature as an extension of their own self. He encouraged humans to think of their surroundings, including other humans, as "the mesh." "The mesh" is the intertwining and interdependence of beings to one another, and to imagine that stretched as large as the universe. There is no beginning or end to nature, and no beginning or end to this radical interweaving. Other beings are not entirely knowable, so humans must appreciate beauty in strangeness and let live what is not understood. "The mesh" is not a mystical concept, and Morton has an interest in how humans proceed politically and ethically from his assumptions.

What emerges from Morton's view on the human/nature relationship is what he terms an "ethic of humility" or an ethic of the non-self. Non-self means humans have to think about political and environmental responsibility in terms of the unknowability of exact causes of environmental crises and the inability to trace individual responsibility for producing an environmental crisis. It is impossible to track exactly how much an individual has contributed to climate change. Mainstream environmentalism encourages the use carbon emissions calculators, asks for individuals to quantify their impact on the

environment, and provides resources to help individuals minimize their physical impact by generating less waste, reusing goods, and choosing less carbon intensive transportation methods. However, they miss the point: Responsibility without a concept of an individual self means we are all responsible for acting differently in the awareness of environmental crises, and action needs to happen collectively. Individual actions to atone for individual environmental “bads” is limited to what an individual can do within the sphere of their personal life. He does not suggest there is not a need for personal accountability, but an ethics of the non-self requires collective action and solutions based on his eco-philosophy.

The solutions section of this book, however, finds Morton’s ethics of the non-self unspecific. His writing does not make clear whether he thinks capitalism is a sustainable system or not, or what his ethics of collective responsibility should advance as a better material relationship to the environment. For Morton, questioning the human/nature relationship replaces an ontological starting point with a perpetually unresolved ontological opening. This openness would ready people to think critically about their relationship to the environment without suggesting a unified idea of nature with specific ends and idealized forms. Instead, humans can replace the idea of nature altogether in favor of ecology. Fellow poststructuralist Félix Guattari politicized this new ecology.

Félix Guattari in *The Three Ecologies* (2008) proposed that the individual is a composed of three primary subjectivities: the environment, social relations, and human subjectivity. The question for Guattari was how to build an ecosophical approach to navigate these three spheres in a way that challenges industrial capitalism. His end goal was this:

The only true response to the ecological crisis is on a global scale, provided that it brings about an authentic political, social, and cultural revolution, reshaping the objectives of the production of both material and immaterial assets. Therefore this revolution must not be exclusively concerned with visible relations of force on a grand scale, but will also take into account molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence, and desire (Guattari 2000, p.20).

Guattari moved ecosophy into the realm of politics, and ultimately argues for a multi-tiered revolutionary approach that works at macro and micro levels. Groups of autonomous, voluntary associations would rise up to respond to ecological crises and dissolve when the need is satisfied, while others would agitate for systemic change.

The radical and direct action environmental movements share some resemblance with this description. Earth First!, Cascadia Forest Defense, and the Oxygen Collective all collectivized to stop logging in the immediate term, but their organizational vision imagined systemic change beyond policy negotiations. Instead of moving across multiple levels of radical activity, radical environmentalists worked with mainstream environmentalists and channeled their energy to stop logging, rather than pursue their broader vision and more radical ends. This single case study does not topple Morton or Guattari, but it does provide a window into the practice of environmentalism deeply embedded in historical and political context, and these contexts bring more weight to the outcome of resource conflicts than what poststructural ecology imagines.

Environmental ethics that are capable of confronting the complex relationships of the social, political, and economic conditions must be nimble and adaptable in response to the dynamism of both nature and society. Morton's conceptualization of the

human/nature relationship remains highly abstract and would benefit from some grounding. His version of environmental ethics is not provoked by a real environmental crisis. However, the ethical implications that emerge from his characterization of the human/nature relationship advance the conversation about the role of ethics in addressing environmental crises, and, like Guattari and Hayward, works to link ethics to politics, economics, and material realities. Environmental ethics ultimately needs to take aim at the normalized practices of the state management of forests and the public/private collusion between the state and the timber industry that has resulted in over a century of deforestation. These practices, ranging from contemporary forest policy to timber sales to the mechanisms of public participation, infused with the logic of capitalism, should not be safely ensconced as post-political administrative machinations. Environmental ethics, formed in relationship to the political, economic, and social conditions of a particular site of a forest crisis, needs to speak to these practices as an ethical conundrum and should be useful as part of a basis for radical political action.

### **Political Economic Framework**

Environmental ethics cannot fully explain why people respond to ecological crises, or help to understand the political approaches and negotiations they undergo in the context of a conflict. Ethics carries inquiry only so far; it persists as abstract thought. The gap between ethics and politics can be more thoroughly explored by encountering case studies through their political and economic realities. The salvage logging controversy in Oregon is situated in a historical moment, within an economic system, and produced through discourses of forestry, ecology, and capitalism that make it singular, and instructive for understanding other environmental conflicts. As guidelines for analyzing

the political and economic contexts of this case, I draw on three political economic theories: Karl Marx's concept of the metabolic rift as formulated and modernized by John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark, and Richard York; Karl Polanyi's theory of fictitious commodities; and James O'Connor's second contradiction of capitalism.

### ***The Metabolic Rift***

Part of the controversial nature of this case is the concern on behalf of some environmentalists that the natural metabolism of the forest would be disrupted if salvage logging, particularly in sensitive parts of the forest, would remove nutrients from the natural metabolic cycle of the forest. This fits with the metabolic rift argument as initially put forth by Karl Marx and expanded in recent years by Richard York, John Bellamy Foster, and Brett Clark (2010). Marx proposed that social alienation grew from alienation between humans and the natural environment. For Marx, nature is the pre-condition for all life. Within a capitalist system, nature became the pre-condition for production and profit.

David Harvey in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2007) argued the end of feudalism and the rise of capitalism around the late Middle Ages brought the displacement of peasants to urban areas. This sudden abundance of cheap labor fueled the European industrial revolution. This new class of poorly paid urban laborers reduced the quantity of people meeting their own needs from their at-home production and local barter. Industrial scale production over-taxed nature. Land was made to produce a high volume of food and fibers, most of which were sent to the city to feed, clothe, and fuel the rising laboring classes. The waste from these products remained bound up in the commodity itself or was discarded in public spaces like rivers. Organic material no longer

returned nutrients to the soil. Marx and soil scientists like Justus von Liebig (Foster 2000) observed that soil exhaustion was responsible for reduced land productivity, which in turn threatened the source of raw materials for production. This unidirectional flow of nutrients from country to town was the metabolic rift.

The modern incarnation of the metabolic rift is the “ecological rift” which expands Marx’s criticism to multiple forms of resource exploitation. The ecological rift is characterized by the series of interconnected ecological tipping points that push the limits of nature’s ability to sustain abuse, pollution, mismanagement, and overuse. The Biscuit controversy is an example of the metabolic rift separating people from the natural cycles of the forest, and separating people from one another as their disagreements about the ontology and social construction of the forest created deep community and ecological schisms. Environmentalists made arguments against salvage logging that ranged from philosophical to ecological. The ecological arguments contended that salvage logging damaged soil, waterways, and habitats. Ecologists pointed out that downed logs and snags were critical components of a forest system and acted as nutrient and water stores that slowly returned to the ground and other biotic material, and acted as habitat for species of plants and animals that depended on the particular characteristics of dead trees (DellaSala as cited in Wuerthner 2006; Ingalsbee as cited in Wuerthner 2006).

While forestry scientists sympathetic to the timber industry claimed that salvage logging was necessary to reduce fuel loads and to protect the already fragile post-burn land from another conflagration (Healthy Forests Restoration Act 2003; Sessions, et.al. 2004), salvage logging would remove nutrients from the forest metabolism and redirect it to the industrial metabolism to become ingredients in wood products. The ecological rift,

in this case, threatened not just the forest itself, but the livelihoods connected to the forest. Loggers and timber-dependent communities do not benefit from rapid clearcut and from reckless forest management. Just as Marx saw the connection between environmental degradation and the breakdown of social and labor relations, the metabolic rift helps to explain the wide-ranging impact of salvage logging the Biscuit.

### ***Fictitious Commodities***

Karl Polanyi argued in *The Great Transformation* (2001) that a liberal economy treats three entities as commodities that are, he believed, too valuable to be commodified. These entities are land, labor, and capital. These three things are not produced to be sold on the market, and have value that cannot be measured by a price signal. He did not offer how to value these things, but just as humans are more than their labor exchange value, the value of nature rests in something else, perhaps something spiritual, or simply as a physical condition so critical to life that it transcends economic valuation. Regardless, the trouble with treating land as a commodity is that value is perceived to be whatever particular aspects of the land (trees, soil, grains, etc.) are worth on the market. If land were left unregulated as a commodity in a totally liberal economy, the market would consume the environment so rapidly and so thoroughly that capitalism would undermine itself, and all life would be at risk. The state must intervene in the regulation of the commodified environment to assign non-economic values and to protect those from the market. He argued that the state should mediate the pace and method of consuming nature so that it is “sustainable” for perpetual use. The Wilderness Act of 1964 is an example of state intervention to moderate the consumption of all available land in the U.S., and to codify non-economic values that cannot be easily overridden.

This theory is essential to understanding the importance of environmentalism in resistance to resource conflict like the salvage logging debates. Environmentalists across the range of perspectives argue that nature is not solely conceivable as an economic good, even if some environmentalists still view nature as synonymous with resources. And like Polanyi, most environmentalists I spoke with about the Biscuit fire could not clearly explain why the forest possessed value beyond a price signal, but the impression that the Forest Service and the timber industry made logging decisions as though forests were commodities was considered an injustice (Interview data, subjects 1, 5, & 6; 2012). In this case, the state did a poor job of slowing the consumption of the forest. The Forest Service final decision on salvage logging was clearly economically motivated (Conroy 2006) and the sale of two logging sites in previously protected areas shows that the state accelerated the exhaustion of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. Polanyi's theory, while relevant to this study, runs afoul of the on-the-ground decisions and actions. However, this theory helps make sense of the logging controversy and the fundamental disagreements that arose between the timber industry, environmentalists, and the state, and is complimentary to O'Connor's second contradiction of capitalism.

### ***The Second Contradiction of Capitalism***

James O'Connor in *Natural Causes* (1997) proposed that capitalism is fraught by two major contradictions within its own logic. This study takes up the second contradiction of capitalism. O'Connor argued there is a fundamental contradiction between self-expanding capital and self-limiting nature. The expansion of capitalism is dependent on the availability of raw materials to fuel production of commodities. Not only are raw materials finite, but often the ecological systems which produce the raw

materials degrade over time and with exposure to the mechanisms of extraction. For example, logging doesn't just remove trees from the forest; it causes other disturbances that weaken the overall forest ecosystem (Ingalsbee 2006). The environment is a precondition for capitalism, which Marx also argued, but capitalism can't help but consume nature. With cooperation from the state, the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest was made available to capitalistic consumption where land had been previously protected. According to Polanyi, to slow the expansion of capitalism is the job of the state. O'Connor and Polanyi both agree that if the state doesn't control capitalism, the system itself will create conditions for its own destruction, and at great expense to the social and natural environment.

The second contradiction is visible in the post-fire salvage logging conflict, especially in the concerns from the environmentalists. Activists and ecological forestry scientists argued that this expansion of logging into a post-fire landscape threatened the future of the forest as an ecologically and aesthetically important place. Rightly so, environmentalists were worried that once private interests were granted access to the forest, they would not self-limit and would log it beyond what the forest could sustain. The second contradiction helps to explain why there was a response of fear, anger, and political mobilization to stop the consumption of dead and downed trees. Those who identified salvage logging as a problem saw the categorization of forests as a commodity as either categorically incorrect or as an incomplete construction of the forest.

## Methods

### Critical Discourse Analysis

I look at several primary texts, including the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the logging decisions, media coverage of the events and political battles, and data from emails exchanged between Hal Salwasser, the Dean of the College of Forestry (CoF) at Oregon State University during the time of the controversy, and several members from timber industry groups and sawmills, the authors of the Session Report that supported an historic number of board feet to harvest from the burn, and CoF alumni. These were made available through a Freedom of Information Act request during the height of the political battles, and I retrieved them from an environmental law office in Portland, Oregon. I was granted access to archived copies of emails released under the FOIA request. Most of my citations from these emails came from my own notes. I also relied on a compilation of key quotes extracted from these emails that was arranged by the law office. I cite these as “FOIA documents,” which are available upon request. My research was supported by my own visit to the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest and a guided hike through the salvage sale sites, as well through photographs, Forest Service maps, and campaign material from various environmental organizations. These texts were invaluable. The Freedom of Information Act retrieved emails, Final Environmental Impact Statement, and campaign materials provided insight into the competing social constructions of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, the range of scientific perspectives on the place of fire in the forest, and how the everyday administration of an environmental conflict shaped the responses from environmentalists to private interests. The federal government was not only impactful for its policy decisions, but also for the banal procedures that produced a certain kind of ecological citizen, and for the implied

and applied violence to those citizens who did not follow the state's guidelines for participation.

I was loosely guided by the ideas of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as I evaluated the available texts. I was especially influenced by Norman Fairclough (2010) and Teun van Dijk (1987). The CDA approach deconstructs the tensions between social actors with power and authority over social actors who are oppressed. The actors with power, such as the timber industry and the state, are able to build or tap into a hegemonic discourse that maintains their position of power. In this case, resource harvesting is an explicit goal of forest and fire policy. The hegemony of forests as raw materials for production, and of capitalism as the economic system to guide forest management, made these actors more powerful than others. van Dijk described hegemony as an unstable discourse coalition. While the timber industry's goals were supported by Forest Service decisions, less powerful actors like environmentalists had to directly confront both the timber companies and the Forest Service; they did not have the status quo on their side. However, because hegemonies are not entirely stable, counter-discourses can have destabilizing effects. Even though the environmentalists failed to halt the logging projects, they made a real impact on state policy decisions and reminded the state of the power of radical democratic participation.

This approach to questioning power relationships is not neutral; CDA is an activist methodology, and to use CDA is to be explicitly sympathetic to those who suffer oppression. This research tells the story of the Biscuit through an openly capitalism-critical position, and offers voice and attention to those actors, human and non-human, who struggled for equal recognition and power during the fight. This research is meant to

be useful to environmentalists and community members with direct interest in forest health. Taking lessons from CDA has enabled me to point out moments of oppression and political dishonesty, and to support current and future battles to protect forests from poor management and naked greed.

### **Interviews**

I relied on interview data to provide on-the-ground accounts of the political protests and direct action taken up by environmentalists directly involved in the post-fire conflict. The interview questions were chosen and organized in a way to encourage a narrative style of storytelling, starting from why individuals chose to affiliate with a particular group, their roles and responsibilities, and transitioning to their ontological, ethical, and epistemic views of the forest. The interview concluded with their reflections on the chosen political strategies and their effectiveness. I identified the organizations that filed lawsuits against the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management and solicited from among those groups volunteers to speak with me about their remembered experience in the conflict. The purpose was not to find objective or factual details about the ecology or economy of the logging controversy, but to help me to understand and identify the ethical concerns at play, the political strategies chosen and why, and reflections on the experience of protesting. The list of interview questions is attached in the appendix D.

I conducted eight interviews, and I was fortunate enough to speak with former and current members of several different organizations. Some of the interviewees had high profile positions within the controversy while others did not. None are identified by name or demographic characteristics. Data collection was limited by a few factors. The post-

fire controversy took place over a decade ago. Many of the radical organizations are no longer active, and many of the activists have moved on to different geographic locations, and have new contact information. Another limitation was the relative secrecy in which these organizations operated. In the post 9/11 political landscape, environmental activists, particularly those who took up civil disobedience, were at real risk for being targeted as an eco-terrorist while they fought the logging sales (Potter 2011). This threat persists, and some former activists do not wish to invite attention to their role in the post-fire logging battles. The threat influenced the way groups operated at the time of the post-fire logging controversy. Groups like Cascadia Forest Defense required members to use pseudonyms, and meeting locations and content were carefully guarded. Not only is it presently difficult to acquire information about their activities, it is unfair to ask former activists to put their lives at risk by disclosing too much information. A further limitation to interview data collection was the relatively small size of the groups of interest. Many of the radical organizations had only two or three core members. Interviewing one or two former group members may not create a lot of data points, but it does give a broad insight into the group itself. The number of interviews does not represent a majority of activists, but it does grant a view into the key members of a core group of organizations that were highly influential in the political battle.

The interviewees were, generally, enthusiastic to share with me their memories of their own sentiments and actions, and their reflections on the successes and failures of their respective organizations. A few shared that they did not think the story of the Biscuit had been sufficiently told, despite its importance in regional political history. Personal narrative in an academic treatment of the Biscuit kept the story anchored in the

lived reality of resource conflicts. Though political theory makes a significant contribution to understanding environmental issues, theory must be balanced with the reminder that conflicts are not abstractions, and at the core of these conflicts is not a study of ideology, but a study of the material reality of a changing environment for all life, including the diversity of human communities directly connected to these environments.

In the spirit of critical discourse analysis, I chose to interview environmentalists, rather than public officials and timber industry representatives, for several reasons. The timber industry and public agencies had relatively easy access to major media outlets. As the emails released under the Freedom of Information Act demonstrated, the American Forest Resource Council (AFRC) was able to plant stories with *The Oregonian* that supported their interest. Excepting alternative press like the *Eugene Weekly* and *High Country News*, coverage from the *New York Times* to the *Christian Science Monitor* named timber companies individually, but mostly lumped all environmentalists into a single category.

Public policy and environmental impact statements already speak on behalf of the Forest Service, and the Forest Service has the power to structure the way the public participated in the post-fire logging decisions. The timber industry had a powerful lobby and public relations group in the AFRC, which lobbies for national and regional policy changes and has a public relations team that was able to draft their messages and promote them through media and among decision makers (see chapter 4). The regional timber industry had a strong, intimate relationship with the College of Forestry at Oregon State University and funded logging studies that typically supported their desire to access more

trees and to log more often (see chapter 4). The public agencies and timber industry perspectives and preferences were already made clear, publicly and in behind the scenes communications (Research notes from FOIA documents). They did not suffer from underrepresentation or a history of marginalization in political battles.

The environmentalists, however, had a very different experience. Their media presence was often found in hand-drawn flyers, and distributed via IndyMedia's online bulletin boards and other small outlets with a relatively narrow readership. Their lobbying efforts came from small political theater tours and forming coalitions with community members who lived near the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest in timber economy towns. Some major environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society participated to stop the logging as well, but these organizations, like the public agencies and the timber industry, have access to mainstream media and are recognizable on a global scale.

The purpose of these interviews was to showcase an important part of the battle that did not have the same financial and political access and reach as other major players. This research does not elevate any of these organizations or individuals to a higher profile; and many would not want that, in any case. Instead, this research hopes to give depth to the environmental movement, and to draw attention to the variety within the movement, in philosophy and strategy. Environmentalists, particularly those in regional and grassroots organizations, are often lumped together as if they all share the same views and goals. The Biscuit, as with all other environmental conflicts, demonstrates the ways these different views were realized and how they had to work alongside each other, in a time sensitive issue, with powerful stakeholders who held oppositional preferences.

While the interviews are limited, they have proven invaluable, and offer insight into a movement whose relevance and intention are often challenged as quaint, idealistic, and disconnected from reality.

## **Overview of the Project**

### **Chapter 2**

Since some of the forests of the United States became a public good through the passage of the Forest Reserve Act in 1891 (Muhn, date unknown), a tension between forests as resources and forests as a special and complex ecological entity has run through the history of land management. Timber companies like Weyerhaeuser funded the forestry schools that would produce many Forest Service Chiefs (Gonzalez 1998). The close connection between timber interests and the expansion of public management turned forests into a publicly funded resource available for private consumption. Although Gifford Pinchot codified “sustainable yield” as the bedrock function of the Forest Service, periods of reckless deforestation have demonstrated not only the power of timber interests over land management decisions, but also the highly subjective nature of the sustainable yield mandate. Many of these land management decisions were guided by traditional forestry, the scholarship of which has long been funded by timber companies (Gonzalez 1998). Forestry research, especially before the 1970s, was often designed to study how to maximize logging yields and how to manage land to produce the most profit (Hays 2006).

In this chapter, I review a selected history of forest science and policy to provide a detailed account of how forests have developed since the beginning of public management. I argue that policy resembles neither a capitalist conspiracy nor an

apolitical sphere of administration guided by pure science. This historical survey of land management lays out the rise of forestry science alongside the emergence of land management policy, and how these two became deeply intertwined. Although the heavy presence of the timber industry in forest management and policy is undeniable, forestry science has since developed beyond a study of economic development of trees to products. The rise of ecology and conservation in the 1970s, the sustainable yield requirement in the mission of the Forest Service, and arguments over management and restoration policies of post-fire landscapes reveal some non-economic bases for forestry decisions.

However, the Biscuit fire case study shows that the history of land management favors granting access to capitalism into forestland. The arguments in favor of salvage logging the Biscuit drew together economic development and a scientific basis for framing salvage as a benefit to forest safety. The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 naturalized industrial scale logging as a tool of stewardship. Neil Smith in *Uneven Development* (2008) carefully constructs an argument that rather than thinking of capitalism positioning itself against nature, capitalism is instead considered an extension of human nature: “To fight it is to fight human nature” (p.29). Capitalist logic is built into the framework of forest management. Although there are other considerations in public policy besides profit, the political history gives reason to believe that public land management favors forests as commodities rather than forests as organisms. This overview leads into a specific look at the political and social constructions of forest fire, and how those have influenced fire management and post-fire decision-making.

## **Chapter 3**

The history of fire management is an extension of the forestry history section, with special focus on the social and political changes in fire management and attitudes. It is hard to speak of the rise of forest management without discussing the central role of fire in the development of publicly managed forests. Before settlement and subsequent urban growth, forest fires were hardly cause for citizen or governmental concern. The Big Blowup of 1910 forced fires onto the public agenda, and with that the management of forests to minimize the risk of future fires. Over the next several decades, fire management vacillated from full suppression efforts to a “let it burn” ethos that resulted in out of control fires that consumed lives and public funding (Pyne 2001). Alongside these variations of fire management techniques were variations in managing the public attitude about forest fires.

The Forest Service’s relationship with the War Ad Council produced cautionary warnings that negligent behavior which caused forest fires would weaken the United States in their military effort against the Japanese and German armies during World War II. When the connection between the timber industry and the war effort loosened after the Second World War, the Forest Service took up a more charismatic and juvenile messaging system in Smokey the Bear, with an emphasis on personal responsibility for forests as a public recreational space. The public perception of fire influenced the kinds of management policies the Forest Service adopted. Years of generating public distaste for fire were evident in the general response to the Biscuit. The fire burned hot and spread violently, which generated a lot of public fear. In turn, the Forest Service spent over a million dollars on suppression, although very little of the fire threatened human communities.

The Biscuit fire controversy, however, was not centered on the treatment of the fire itself, although concerned citizens, environmentalists, and forestry scientists point out that the Rogue-Siskiyou was predisposed to a major fire due to decades of poor land management schemes. These criticisms were secondary to the primary preoccupation of what to do with a forest after the fire has been extinguished. Fire policy doesn't end with the flames, and in many ways fire policy is more impactful in shaping the forest in its post-fire prescriptions. One of the most controversial post-fire management operations is salvage logging. Salvage logging makes available trees that are downed, fire killed, or considered a fire hazard. Logging is always an ecologically damaging event that causes soil erosion, soil compaction, habitat and waterway disturbance, and severely disrupts the ecology and nutrient flow of a given forest ecosystem (Ingalsbee 2010).

Salvage logging increases the damages because the post-fire land is more fragile, and is in need of gentle restoration (Lindenmayer, Burton & Franklin 2008; Ingalsbee 2010). Although legislation like the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 pitched salvage logging as part of a fuels management program, there is little scientific evidence that salvage logging has any ecological benefit. Ingalsbee (2010) explained:

Given that controversy over salvage logging has been growing since the big fires of the late 1980s, some forest managers and elected officials have raised a new justification for salvage logging that capitalizes on the public's socially-conditioned fear of forest fires: the claim that fire-killed trees must be removed quickly before they fuel a future catastrophic wildfire. This is the so-called "reburn hypothesis" and it assumes that fire-killed trees pose an extreme fuel hazard and fire risk; therefore, by removing dead and dying trees, salvage logging

can reduce the probability of a future high-intensity wildfire. Unfortunately for the proponents of the reburn hypothesis, there is no support in the scientific literature demonstrating that the probability for high-intensity fires is greater for areas of abundant fire-killed snags and logs compared to salvage logged areas. The fact is, there simply is not a strong scientific or ecological basis for using post-fire salvage logging as a tool for wildfire prevention, post-fire ‘recovery’ objectives, or ecosystem restoration objectives.

Salvage logging, then, is to salvage profits rather than salvage the viability of the forest. Deforestation is not exclusively clearcuts and illegal logging. Various mechanisms to denude forests are found in the intent and language of public policy dominated by a perception of forests as capital and as inputs into the industrial metabolism. This view enables logging for profit to be considered a “forest treatment” and fuels management. This chapter pulls from my prior sections on the different kinds of forestry sciences to help explain how salvage logging, and logging generally, came to be regarded as a policy solution to forest health. Forestry science is not politically neutral. It is developed within the logical framework of capitalism, and among scientists and decision makers who share assumptions about the economic importance of trees as commodities. I look at the explicit politics and the inexplicit theoretical premises that created the conditions for this particular post-fire controversy.

## **Chapter 4**

This chapter introduces the Biscuit fire in 2002. I provide a detailed accounting for all of the major environmental organizations that directly intervened to stop the salvage logging sales in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. These organizational

descriptions are heavily influenced by the interview data I collected from former anti-logging activists. This section displays the diversity of ontological and political perspectives and strategies that existed within the environmental movement to stop the logging. These differences were overcome through strategic alliances and mutual support, even to the detriment of the stated mission of these organizations to either never support direct action, or to never support mainstream environmentalism. These organizations did not, from the perspectives shared with me, view themselves as compromised, but instead as united in the urgency of the problem.

However, these compromises reveal that the pressure from natural resource conflicts can erode even the most radical ideological positions. Whether or not this is a problem is part of the question of how environmentalism should respond to conflicts and injustices. I look at how environmentalists responded alongside the opportunities for public participation granted through the Forest Service. The Forest Service offered public hearings, letter writing, and other highly controlled means by which the average citizen could weigh in on the land management decisions. By evaluating these mechanisms through the theory of governmentality as presented by Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose (2008), I argue that the ordinary practices of public participation deterred modes of participation and resistance that were taken up by the most active environmental organizations.

While environmentalists were hard at work blocking the logging projects, the academy was engaged with equal vigor in support of logging the post-fire land. Oregon State University's College of Forestry produced dueling academic articles about the impacts of salvage logging on a post-fire landscape. The Sessions Report was funded by

timber-dependent Douglas County, and recommended the Forest Service make available an historic number of board feet for harvest, including timber in wilderness protected areas. The Donato Report found that salvage logging had a detrimental effect on forest restoration after a fire, and recommended minimal land management and an avoidance of logging. The Dean of the College of Forestry threw his support behind the Sessions Report, and attempted to block publication of the Donato Report in a prestigious academic journal. I explore the tight relationship between the regional timber industry and the college, and the impact this had on the political conflict. Ultimately, this chapter brings to bear the political economic theory framework I describe earlier in the introduction to help to explain what ideological and political barriers environmentalists had to encounter. A dominant ideological view that forests were resources ready for commodification meant environmentalists were not just up against a particular set of decisions; they were up against a long-standing and powerful history.

## **Chapter 5**

The conceptual and physical treatment of the post-fire forest was not tolerated by everyone. Many environmental organizations tried to stop the salvage logging projects. Some filed lawsuits against the Forest Service, and others made themselves human barriers between chainsaw and tree. This kind of “tree hugger” activism is hardly an American invention – the Chipko Movement is a prime example (Shiva 1988) – but the various forms of political response to the salvage logging controversy in Oregon speaks to resistance specifically aimed at the commodification of trees and the naturalization of capitalism. As is often the case in environmental conflicts, activism included a broad spectrum of ontological assumptions and epistemological preferences. This research finds

that environmentalism against deforestation was a complicated mix of complimentary goals, theoretical differences overcome by strategic alliances, and solidarity of varying degrees of support.

Rather than view environmentalism as a homogenous, well-organized response to salvage logging, environmentalism was characterized by semi-permeable boundaries among the various strategies and positions, different levels of access to decision-making and to media, and moments of unity among otherwise autonomous actors. While many of the environmental organizations were ideologically oppositional, they were willing to negotiate ideology for a stronger political front. This chapter relies heavily on interview data from activists formerly involved in the movement to stop logging the Rogue-Siskiyou. I compare different accounts, campaign materials, and organizational positions to how these same groups and people behaved on the ground. I look to Chad Lavin's (2008) discussion of political responsibility to guide my analysis of how and why different groups chose to act.

One of my key findings is that even the most ideologically radical organizations felt obliged to support efforts to make changes within the administrative system, even if their strategies were focused on direct action and civil disobedience. A second key finding is that radical environmentalists were caught between trying to break out of mainstream political strategies anchored in a liberal conception of responsibility, and their desire to address the urgency of the logging problem through whatever means were available. In all cases, radical environmentalists collaborated with mainstream environmentalists, even if this required acting against the mission and values of their affiliated organization. Radical environmentalists were ultimately not able to break

through or bring critical awareness to the limitations of liberal responsibility in environmentalism.

## **Chapter 6**

I analyze the Biscuit post-fire logging controversy because it is an opportunity to explore the role of capitalism in the formation and execution of land management; the influence of social perspectives on forests and fires on land management decisions; and how political theory can help explain why the Rogue-Siskiyou was logged. This research opens up conversations about what environmentalism can and cannot do in response to natural resource conflicts. I provide an overview of the project objectives; demonstrates why deforestation is an issue worth continuing research; makes a connection between environmental philosophy and political theory to support claims and explain phenomena; and investigates why the gap between ethics and politics is important to real environmental crises.

In my analysis of the response to post-fire salvage logging, I look to some key theories of environmental ethics and responsibility to help explain the political controversy and what drives environmentalism in response to natural resource conflicts. As I elaborate further in the introduction and again in chapter 4, the relationship between humans and forests is, in the late modern capitalism found in the United States, overshadowed by the misconception of nature as a commodity (Polanyi 2001), and the inaccurate valuation of natural resources as “free gifts” to industry (Foster 2010). Neil Smith in his work *Uneven Development* (2008) made the important and accurate assertion that capitalism is considered an extension of human nature, akin to the Herbert Spencer’s popular sociobiology speculation that humans are driven by naked self-interest. If

capitalism is natural, then nature belongs within capitalism because they are one in the same. Policy language that describes logging as restorative plays on the same assumption that what's good for the economy is good for nature. While the Forest Service and timber industry tried to convince the public and decision-makers that making a profit from wildfire had a positive impact on forest ecology, environmentalists countered the assumption that nature and capitalism were bettered by the same actions.

Even though their campaigns to block salvage logging effectively failed, environmentalists did succeed in pulling apart ecology from economy in land management decisions, and calling into question the history of collusion between private and public interests in the forest. Perhaps, then, one of the jobs of environmentalists is to draw attention to the historically contingent nature of capitalism, and to avoid solutions and negotiations that tacitly accept capitalistic goals in forest use. How far environmentalists questioned the role of capitalism in forest management became a point of debate and difference within the environmental movement. I analyze the intervention in the logging conflict to illuminate the variation that exists within environmentalism, and to provide a depth of analysis that is not often granted to this movement.

As environmental crises and resource conflicts grow more urgent and more prevalent, this work contributes to contemporary analysis of environmentalism and environmentalist strategies, and how lessons from the past can help to make sense of and inform current activism. This analysis points to the impossible gap between ethics and politics. While environmentalists had strong ideological positions and ontological assumptions, their political choices reflected short-term goals to stop this particular

disturbance, rather than their long-term goals to realize a different political system, or to radically alter public policy.

The story of the Biscuit post-fire logging controversy tells us that there isn't a single political approach or ethical framework that will alone effectively point out policy failures and will bring about a radically different prescription. However, this research gives color and life to the actors who had critical influence over the fate of the forest. Interestingly, the state was caught its own mission statement to support sustainable yield, logging interests, and healthy forests. As each chapter demonstrates, the state's interest in public forests merged with private interests in profiting from forests, giving the state less autonomy to act as an arbiter between conflicting interests. Guattari (2008) nicely described this problem: "Trapped in this double pincher movement, the nation States see their traditional role of mediation being reduced more and more, and they are frequently put in the combined service of the authorities of the global marketplace and of military-industrial complex" (p.21). Although the state does not necessarily have to be in the service of the capitalist, the Forest Service conferred preference to private interests, and managed public land in the industry's favor. So long as the state is able to act otherwise, and able to be an adequate representative of the public good (itself an open question), environmentalists will have to respond to the specific ways the state and private relationships manifest in their own contexts.

To do so, environmentalism will have to set aside the ontological and philosophical questions of what nature is, and how humans ought to form relationships to the natural world. Ethics is too challenged by the immediacy of environmental problems to be applied as a basis for all political strategies. Environmentalists will have to work

with forest scientists, ecologists, and the state to identify ecology-based management plans. But they will need more political power in order to enact their vision for better land management. This research offers an in-depth look into what natural resource conflicts look like as they play out, and how environmentalism struggles within itself to meet their goals and to challenge powerful economic and political frameworks that prevent significant change from taking root. As forests continue to dwindle, and as activists across the nation mobilize to stop the Keystone XL pipeline that will carry Canadian tar sands to the Gulf of Mexico, the future of environmentalism has never been more critical.

## **Chapter 2: The Politics of Forest Management**

Forests in the Northwest underwent a transformation over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the time of early exploration and settlement, those who encountered the enormous old growth stands considered them to be dangerous wilds and a barrier to civilization (White 1995). Settlement required logs for housing, and as technology like the locomotive enabled loggers to increase the speed and quantity of their hauls, these forests became heavily mined to promote the expansion of western civilization. Since Gifford Pinchot introduced the “sustainable yield” to balance forest ecology with commercial logging (“The First Century” 2008), the Forest Service and federal government has had to reconcile the deep pressure to open up public land for private gain with the pressure to maintain forests for their undeniable ecological benefit. Forestry discourse reflected this tension. This chapter will examine a few key moments in the development of federal forest management and the different discourses of forestry science that has shaped policy and public perception of what constitutes responsible use of the forest. Together, this discourse analysis and policy review provide political context for the controversial post-fire salvage logging in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest.

### **Key Developments in Forest Management**

#### **Early Days of the Forest Service**

The first forest reserves, established as part of the Federal Forest Reserve Act of 1891, enabled the federal government to set aside publicly owned forests for non-economic use. President Harrison placed 13 million acres in reserve after its passage (“The First Century” 2008). After a protracted battle between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior for control over the nation’s forests, the

United States Forest Service was created in 1905. As part of the Transfer Act of 1905, the Department of the Interior forest holdings became the administrative responsibility of the Department of Agriculture. The 1897 Organic Act slowed forest cutting to protect watersheds and to buffer against a perceived timber famine that would follow the exhaustion of the country's stocks of trees. The Organic Act preceded the Transfer Act ensured that the goals of national forest management, and concerns, were part of the inheritance of the new Forest Service.

Theodore Roosevelt appointed Gifford Pinchot as the first Chief of the Forest Service in 1905 (Egan 2010). Pinchot played a significant role in shaping what would become the leading discourse of rational and scientific forestry. Trained in Europe and a believer in the European *Normalbaum* land management approach, Pinchot directed the Forest Service to manage forestland as a “working forest.” (“The Eastern Forest” 2013). The working forest embodied the multiple purposes of the Forest Service itself: conservation, recreation, ecological stability, and economic productivity. Identifying the forest as a place of multiple and competing purposes early on all but guaranteed disputes over use and the right relationship between humans and forest. Despite his interest in responding to the “timber famine” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Pinchot naturalized industrial logging and timber interests as part of the working forest (Cannavò 2007). Public policy made it possible for industrial logging to take place on public land, and to take precedence over other land management goals.

In the 1920s and 1930s the General Land Office (GLO), founded in 1812, managed the private sale of public land (“Managing a Land Office Business” 2013). Weak regulation and poor enforcement lead to overly aggressive sale and harvest of

public lands, especially logging. In response, the federal government passed two significant land management policies: the L-20 Regulations issued in 1929, and the U regulations issued in 1939. These regulations gave the federal government more control over how and at what pace federal land was developed. The 1926 land inventory by the Forest Service became the administrative basis for the L-20 Regulations. This was not a wilderness protection program; it was a list of permitted and prohibited activities in Forest Service primitive areas. Timber harvesting and other commercial activities were allowed, but they were regulated more carefully by the GLO. The regulations were designed to prevent agency personnel from haphazardly and hastily developing land, but not to stop the development altogether. These regulations reveal the long history of public land administered as a private commodity, with little regard to other public uses or its own ecological importance. The new regulations were not widely enforced. However, they were eventually part of a power battle between land management agencies. The Forest Service competed with the National Park Service to transfer forests to their own holdings in a competition for control of and power over land (Dawson & Hendee 2002).

Conservationists were dissatisfied with the L-20 regulations (Dawson & Hendee 2002), and in 1939 these were replaced with the U Regulations. The main goals and concerns are identified in Table 1 below:

	Main Goals	Issues
<b>Pre-1920s</b>	Federal government gave away land for development	No conservation of wild areas
<b>L-20 Reg.: 1929</b>	First systematic program; Mixed-use; Slowed development	Poorly enforced; Not wilderness protection Part of agency competition

<b>U Regs.: 1939</b>	Created different wilderness designations; Provided more protection of areas	Review of areas slow; Still only slowed development
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**Table 1. L-20 and U Regulations Goals and Issues.** This table provides a brief summary of the different land regulation goals, and of the subsequent issues that emerged after each regulatory policy. The U Regulations enabled protecting roadless lands in national forests (Dawson & Hendee 2002, used under fair use, 2013).

The U Regulations included other values besides commercial use, like protection for recreational purposes. These regulations were closer to a protection designation than the L-20, but not unproblematic. Land was not protected as it moved through the reclassification process. Consequently, the slow process allowed for logging and development while the land was between designation statuses (Dawson & Hendee 2002). Early conservationists called for a stronger and more comprehensive system of land protection and inventory. The Wilderness Protection Act of 1964 was, in part, born out of this dissatisfaction. The Wilderness Protection Act explicitly regarded nature as valuable for non-economic reasons, and created a system by which land would be identified and then classified as off-limits to economic development and resource extraction (“The Wilderness Society”).

The transition from the U Regulations to greater federal oversight of resource use marked a positive development, but it also partook of the “sustainable yield” attitude set by Gifford Pinchot that would prove far too subjective to meaningfully protect forests and old growth from rapacious logging. This tension between productivity and conservation was played out in all subsequent forest management policies. This was especially evident in the Congressional battle over the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

## **Reordering Multiple Use Priorities in the National Forest Management Act**

The National Forest Management Plan (NFMP) was a significant overhaul of federal forest policy. Michael Gippert and Vincent DeWitte (1996-1997) considered it one of the most important moments in federal land management history: “The National Forest Management Act of 1976...began a revolution in forest planning, creating the most detailed and participatory forest and rangeland planning process even undertaken” (p.153). The NFMA outlined specific uses and limits of use for national forests, including maximum timber yields and processes for making regional land use decisions. The provisions of the Act were modeled after land use zoning. The Act attempted to integrate the multiple and overlapping land use rules across NEPA and the Endangered Species Act, and “in this way, the Forest Plan acts as a gateway to all future project decision-making” (Gippert & DeWitte 1996-97, p.156). One of the policy goals was to smooth the friction of multiple goals of forest use with the need to expand public participation so controversies could be addressed before critical decisions were made. The NFMA provided space for local and regional decisions based on the specific ecological conditions of a given site.

The NFMA arrived as both fire management and timber harvesting came under closer scrutiny. Federico Cheever (1998) provided an overview of the Forest Service prior to the cascade of environmental regulations in the 1970s:

Congress funded Forest Service activities on the national forests, but, within that funding structure, the Forest Service managed those forests – in large part – as it saw fit... Yet the laws that provided substantive, congressionally imposed limits on Forest Service management of the national forests, such as the Organic Yield

Act, were brief in the extreme and contained little in the way of substantive prescriptions or proscriptions and less that anyone enforced. It was in this state of relative freedom from congressional mandate that the Forest Service had developed its culture and methods (p.608).

Not only did the Forest Service operate with little congressional oversight, it operated with little regard for the ecological impacts of its mostly economic activity. The sub-committee of Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs convened to address these oversights. The group was known as the “The Church Committee”, named for Committee Chair and Idaho senator, Frank Church. Church had a long track record as an advocate for wilderness protection, particularly in his native Idaho. He was a strong promoter of the Wilderness Act of 1964, and although Church didn’t write the wilderness protection legislation himself, he championed the bill and saw to its passage. He subscribed to the conservation ethic of Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot (Dant 2008). He recognized the economic benefit of logging, but he also saw other values of great importance to the American people, like recreation and aesthetic appreciation (Dant 2008). The Church Committee sought to hold the Forest Service accountable to its own mission to moderate the timber harvest.

During the committee hearings, geologist Robert Curry testified that clearcutting was exhausting forest soil beyond repair. This would lead to such a degraded state that even tree farms would fail to thrive after three generations (Cheever 1998). In 1970 the Dean of the School of Forestry of the University of Montana, Arnold Bolle, published “The Bolle Report,” which supported Curry’s “general orientation by drawing a distinction between sustainable ‘timber management’ and unsustainable ‘timber mining,’

asserting that much current timbering on the national forests was timber mining”

(Cheever 1998, p.612). The report argued the following:

There is an implicit attitude among many people on the staff of the Bitterroot National Forest that resource production goals come first and that land management considerations take second place. We believe that this is not merely with respect to the Bitterroot National Forest. It is widespread through the Forest Service, especially with respect to timber production in a sense that getting the logs out comes first...The pressures upon the Forest Service to get the logs out cannot be surmounted without the express assistance of Congress (Cheever 1998, p.613).

The report accused the Forest Service of overemphasizing its mandate to “get out the cut” at the expense of its charge to protect the ecological system, and backed up this assertion with evidence of increased economic activity on national forests: “The timber harvest from national forest lands had more than tripled – from 3.5 billion board feet to 11.53 billion board feet – in the twenty years between 1950-1970” (Cheever 1998, p.614).

Not only was the quantity of board feet concerning, but the methods of harvest fell under scrutiny during the Church Committee. The testimony and reports pointed to the immediate impact on the forest from clearcutting. Clearcutting acted as an umbrella term for multiple modes of harvest, including shelterwood or seed tree cutting. Cheever outlined the differences among the different forms of clearcut:

Removing the original stand of trees in more than one cut. In a seed tree cut, loggers remove almost everything in the first cut. Only enough mature trees are left to reseed the cutover stand. Once seedlings establish themselves, the loggers

remove the last mature trees. A shelterwood cut differs only in that more trees are left behind – both to provide seed and to shelter the seedlings once established.

Once the new stand is well established, the loggers remove the last mature trees, at least in theory. Environmentalists are inclined to refer to seed tree and shelterwood cutting as two-stage or three-stage clearcuts, to emphasize that foresters designed these cutting methods to produce the same uniform stand of trees clearcutting produces (Cheever 1998, p.615-616).

Clearcutting took on many forms. Some, like shelterwood cutting, could easily pass as a sustainable management technique. So much clearcutting took an ecological toll on public forests. Undeniably, the Forest Service needed greater oversight, and oversight meant requiring decisions to consider non-economic land use values with an emphasis on regional decision-making. Geology, biology, and forest ecology were incorporated into the NFMA as part of the framework for determining whether or not forestland could be used for economic development or for conservation.

The forest standards that would become the framework of the NFMA were partially culled from the Forest Service's own identification of their institutional problems and solutions. In the Forest Service report, *National Forest Management in a Quality Environment: Timber Productivity*, the agency identified under what conditions clearcutting may be infeasible and what alternative actions could be considered (Cheever 1998). These critiques were included in the new NFMA. Ultimately, according to Cheever (1998), the Church Committee produced a set of problems that the new legislation would have to address:

First, the Forest Service possessed a culture that, as documented in the Bolle Report, militated in favor of maximum sustainable (or unsustainable) timber production. Second, Forest Service timber management practices translated that culture into the unsightly clearcuts documented in so many photographs presented to the committee and witnessed by so many disgruntled members of Congress. Third, the combination of culture and practice degraded the national environment, most obviously Dr. Curry's forest soils but also forest-dependent wildlife (p.621). NFMA was not only an attempt to provide greater oversight to harvest levels and land management techniques, but it also offered a small but necessary critique of the Forest Service itself and the way the agency managed its multiple mandates. As argued by Robert Breazeale (2000), NFMA was not meant to replace existing forest management policies like the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act (MUSYA). It was supposed to transfer decision-making power from the public, courts, and congress to forest scientists and professional foresters, mostly in the Forest Service.

Cornerstone policies like MUSYA and the Organic Act of 1897 failed to provide conflict resolution mechanisms, despite requiring the Forest Service and congress to arbitrate among multiple uses and needs of forests. As Cheever notes, NFMA moved to provide a decision-making framework for competing values that, if weighted differently, would result in different land management decisions. Critics like Cheever make compelling arguments that NFMA was ultimately an insufficient response to the charges leveled at modern forest management.

The modes of public participation in NFMA did not provide the necessary avenues for impactful citizen input (Mortimer, Scardina, & Jenkins 2004) and the policy used the discourse of scientific forestry to rationalize civic disengagement from the management of the commons. While an emphasis on science-based policy decisions is an improvement over political agreements between timber companies and politicians, it took away power from citizens to impact outcomes. The 1970s marked a discursive shift from managing forests as commodities to forests as ecological systems, habitats, each possessing natural values. This shift emerged within forestry schools and the Forest Service, which historically enjoyed a close relationship with the industry, and often published research that were sympathetic to their economic needs.

The potential for overhauling forest management with the ecological sciences remained stymied by the uptake of this new language into the existing structures of land management. The language began to change, but the political relationships did not. Although a stronger connection to ecological sciences in NFMA resulted in a reduced harvest yield from Congress and a decline in forest use for commodities, the mechanisms for citizens to oversee and intervene were limited as the changes began to take hold. This tension between scientific forest management and democracy reached a new tipping point in the Northwest spotted owl crisis in the 1990s.

### **“The Owls are Not What They Seem”: The Scientific Turn in Forest Management**

A turning point in forest management legislation emerged from the infamous northern spotted owl controversy in the Pacific Northwest, which challenged the multiple use mandate of the Forest Service in a public and fiercely contested drama. While the NFMA tried to strengthen ecological science as a basis for making logging decisions, the

outcome was still largely in favor of high timber yields and permitted clearcutting where practicable. The spotted owl crisis forced reconsideration of harvest levels. The Northwest Forest Plan emerged amid growing awareness that the bountiful ancient forests of the Pacific Northwest were deeply impacted by centuries of aggressive logging. NASA satellite images distributed to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 showed more forest fragmentation in the Pacific Northwest than the Amazon rainforest (Tokar 1994). Less than 5% of original old growth remained in the Northwest, most of it protected in federal land holdings.

This growing awareness was linked to the spotted owl population crisis. The spotted owl conflict dated back to 1977 when the Fish and Wildlife Service created the first owl reserves, despite the protests of the Forest Service (“Northwest Forest Plan Overview” 1994). The owl was of interest not only as an endangered species, but also as an indicator species by which to gauge forest health more broadly. Owl habitat ranges from 1,000-10,000 acres in old growth stands, so protecting owls would require removing from economic use large tracts of public forest.

The owl was emblematic of the rift between ecological and commodity forestry. The technical and seemingly non-political activities of identifying owl habitats and species health challenged the prior zoning of public land for tree harvesting, and it forced the Forest Service to confront the reality of accepting the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as a legitimate set of scientific and social claims on the right use of the forest. Owl survival was not strictly a matter of protecting the species for its own sake; owl protection became a battleground for power among federal, state, and local land management agencies, particularly the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish and Wildlife

Service. When the spotted owl issue rose to national attention, it brought with it questions about the wisdom of the ESA, and just how generous congress had been with timber yields in the last century. Activists were not just concerned for the owls, they were also fighting to protect old growth stands. Spotted owls thrived deep in old growth forests, so extending support for owls was also a way to agitate for better forest protection.

Old growth is often described by environmentalists in spiritual and philosophical language. They are called ancient, virgin, and legacy trees. These terms convey a sense of timelessness and reverence. Virgin trees implied that they were unspoiled by industry and progress, and they were important historical and ecological artifacts. The Forest Service, however, adopted a strict ecological perspective on what constitutes old growth. Their definition is important because trees that fall outside of these criteria are vulnerable to industrial logging. Old growth forests are commonly defined by tree species and age.

According to the Forest Service,

The coastal old-growth forests are in the region from southwest Oregon to southeast Alaska, from the Pacific Ocean to the crest of the Cascade Range. In this area, the most common type of old-growth ecosystem is forest dominated by Douglas firs and western hemlocks, generally 350 to 750 years old. The youngest old growth forests are 200 years old, and the oldest are about 1,000 years old (“About the Pacific Northwest”).

According to the USFS, old growths have four main structures, detailed in the table below. All descriptions are directly from the Forest Service website cited above.

Structure	Details
Big trees	The huge trees are the main “factories” of the old growth forests, because the trees bring energy into the forest through photosynthesis. Each tree stores

	many tons of organic material and nutrients, which are eventually recycled back into the ecosystem. The big trees are also the source of the next two structures.
Large snags (standing dead trees)	Snags are used by many different kinds of wildlife, including pileated woodpeckers and spotted owls.
Multi-sized snags and trees	Snags and trees of different sizes create an intricate canopy in an old-growth forest. Large fallen trees decay on the forest floor. It takes many decades for a fallen tree to decay completely. As the fallen tree decays, they become homes for many living creatures, including carpenter ants, folding-door spiders, centipedes, salamanders, and shrews. Mushrooms and other fungi grow on the rotting trees, and eventually the rotten trees turn into nurse logs, as young trees grow on top of them.
Deep, complex, continuous canopy	The big old trees have large branches and deep crowns. Younger, smaller trees spread their branches through spaces between big trees. Shrubs such as rhododendrons create another layer. An old-growth forest has so many layers of branches that the canopy is essentially continuous.

**Table 2. Old Growth Forest Characteristics.** This table provides an overview of the different characteristics of an old growth forest (“About the Pacific Northwest” 2013, used under fair use, 2013).

Old growth forests are defined in a multitude of ways: an ecological forestry perspective which defines the ecosystems and complex structures that characterize these forests; a forestry perspective which defines them in terms of unused and rotting timber; and spiritual and folk constructions that ascribe intrinsic value and often carry an sensibility of deep ecology (Hays 2006). These differences matter. How old growth is categorized determines how it will be cared for, either as a commodity or as irreplaceable components of a complex ecosystem.

The timber industry responded to calls to reduce logging in spotted owl habitat by claiming that smaller harvests would kill the timber economy. This argument did not square with records that showed a steady decline in timber-related employment and local profits (although corporate profits continued to soar) that preceded the spotted owl concern. This decline in the local and regional timber industry was mostly caused by the transition from milling and selling minimally modified logs to reducing them to chips for press and particle board, a more efficient way to turn trees into products that bypassed local sawmills. Instead, the spotted owl, while an important issue in itself, was used to divert attention from changes in the timber industry that benefited those who owned the means of production.

In 1987, the owl was placed on the Endangered Species list. This was a politically sensitive decision. A Government Accounting Office report from February of 1989 made it clear that "...politics, and not science or law, had been responsible for the earlier FWS [Fish and Wildlife Service] decision to not list the owl" (Yaffee 1994, p.116). As an endangered species, the owl required extensive habitat research, which government agencies were reluctant to do. To move the process forward, regional and national environmental non-profit organizations sued the timber industry to halt commercial cutting in federal forests until the habitats were sufficiently protected. Terre Satterfield (2002) described the lawsuits and the economic impacts that resulted from them:

In a set of landmark cases from 1989-1993, the federal courts found that the National Forest Management Act and the Endangered Species Act, both of which had provisions to protect species, had been clearly and consistently violated by the timber industry. The Ninth Circuit Court ruled that public forests were not

being logged in a sustainable fashion and that no suitable policy had been developed to protect the endangered northern spotted owl. The sale of any new timber on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands west of the Cascade Mountains in the Pacific Northwest was to cease until a legally credible and scientifically sound plan could be enacted (p.6).

This decision resulted in a number of job losses in the local timber industry, particularly local sawmills, direct action conflicts, lawsuits, and national exposure of the issue.

Satterfield (2002) narrowed in on the discursive significance of this decision:

To those directly employed by the wood products industry the decisions were harsh and abrupt – the result of an overzealous, ill-informed tide of sympathy for the natural world. To environmentalists, they were the culmination of decades of pressure on government and industry, who were perceived as having a destructive and all-powerful hold on the fate of the Pacific Northwest forests (p.5-6).

For environmentalists, the discourse of commodity forestry had dominated public policy for too long and the court injunction was a moment to assert their position. The differing epistemologies of the loggers and environmentalists ruptured communities. These differences played out in death threats, politically motivated killings of owls, and direct action tactics like road blockades. These events unfolded like civil wars in timber towns. Divisions within affected communities were only superficially addressed in the policy process, with community members playing a media-friendly but insubstantial role in the conflict resolution talks, while the land management decisions were carried out within the Forest Service.

Newly elected President Clinton promised to address the spotted owl controversy within the first 200 days of his presidency, a promise he fulfilled when he convened the Forest Summit in Portland, Oregon in April of 1993. President Clinton invited to the Forest Summit three cabinet secretaries, Pacific Northwest residents directly affected by the outcome, twenty-one representatives of the timber industry (both labor and management), four fisheries groups, nine environmentalists, six scientists, state and local level government representatives, two economists, two sociologists, a vocational counselor, and the Archbishop of Seattle (Yaffee 1994). President Clinton's intent was to pull the conflict away from politics and into the scientific and expert sphere. Not unlike Pinchot's policy logic, President Clinton considered the spotted owl issue as a rational problem. He sought resolution through empirical and scientific data, although in so doing, he reordered the priorities of public land management to give more priority to conservation.

The summit served as a transition from the legal and popular mechanisms of direct participation – public hearings on Forest Service reports, lawsuits, and direct action – to a highly regulated and tightly controlled media event where participants were chosen, their roles assigned, and their space to speak pre-allotted; there was no active debate among the participants. Stephen Yaffee (1994) described the participatory oversights:

Just as remarkable was the set of individuals who were not visibly participating in the dialogue at the conference: the agencies and the Northwest Congressional delegation, some of the major historic players in the dispute...While the agencies and the members of Congress were present as invited members of the audience,

the team planning the event orchestrated it to focus on a small set of experts and a larger set of Pacific Northwest residents who were personally affected by any outcome. This approach reduced the amount of grandstanding at the conference, offset the need for many participants to defend past actions, and focused many of the presentations on the kind of personal stories cherished by the President and loved by the media (p.142).

Although the Summit was broadcast over C-SPAN, the real audience sat in the makeshift studio: representatives of the timber industry, who were given front row seats to access the thoughts, experiences, and arguments among those with whom they would have to fight or make alliances. While a few local industry representatives, mostly sawmill owners, participated in the forum, those who held the most political and economic power had to answer to no one, they only had to watch and learn.

The conference was held in the Portland Convention Center, located in the urban heart of the state, rather than geographically close to the forests in question. The citizen panel was limited to participants sharing their concerns for the viability of their communities, local economies, and their commitment to cooperate with the government. President Clinton's opening speech at the Conference demonstrated an affinity for ecological modernization: "This is not about choosing between jobs and the environment, but about recognizing the importance of both, and recognizing that virtually everyone here and everyone in this region care about both" (President Clinton, Forest Conference, April 2, 1993). While interdependency is not an inappropriate posture in public policy, forcefully linking two ideas together to ensure the survival of one is not mutual interdependence. President Clinton made it clear that it was not appropriate to discuss the

issue outside of a “jobs and forests” paradigm. The format of the Summit separated knowledge about the timber economy from knowledge about forest ecology.

The Forest Summit and resulting Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) had far-reaching implications. The NWFP transcended the spotted owl conflict and made paradigmatic changes to the nature of forest management. The policy shifted the discourse of forest management away from industrial use and towards environmental and economic sustainability, including considerations for old growth forests and biodiversity, ideas that previously had little to no representation in land management legislation. Among top priorities of the plan was protecting salmon runs and waterways, spotted owl habitat, old growth trees, and forest-based jobs. Clinton set a predictable and sustainable maximum timber yield. The NWFP covered 24.5 million acres in Oregon, Washington, and northern California. The Forest Service retained control over most of the land, leaving old conflicts to continue to play out in the contested territory. Table 2 details the land holdings among the federal agencies:

Forest Service	19 National forests	19,400,000 acres	79% of land within NWFP
Bureau of Land Management	7 districts	2,700,000	11% of land within NWFP
National Park Service	6 National parks	2,200,000 acres	9% of land within NWFP
National Wildlife Refuge and Dept. of Defense	Unknown number of management areas	165,000 acres	4% of land within NWFP

**Table 3. Land Holdings Among Federal Agencies under the Northwest Forest Plan.**  
This table shows how much land within the range of the NWFP was held by each of the land management agencies. This information was retrieved from the Regional Ecosystem

Office website of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest section of the US Forest Service website (Regional Ecosystem Office ROD 1994, used under fair use, 2013).

The Forest Summit, while an outward display of elevating local knowledge and subordinating government actors, was more theater than substance. After the media-friendly storytelling, the work of crafting policy options was left to the same agencies that were audience members. The Forest Summit was not real collaboration, despite the presence of affected citizens.

After the Summit, participants were broken up into three working groups, known as the Forest Ecosystem Management Team (FEMAT). Central to the Summit was co-prioritizing economics and human dimensions and binding together ecology, science, and credibility as a mutually reinforcing strategy. The principles point out which types of knowledge would be privileged (ecological science) and which process would be privileged (the legal system). There was no mandate for affected communities to be part of the knowledge-making and decision-making processes. Timothy Luke (2009) described how citizens are reduced to users and inhabitants, and participated in the most limited sense:

As Nature becomes in these frames an ecological commons, planetary infrastructures or biodiversity assets, the citizen thus – despite Aldo Leopold’s pleas otherwise – is demoted to being a mere inhabitant, and ‘the habitant is reduced to a user, restricted to demanding the efficient operation of public services’ (Lefebvre 1981: 79)” (p.22).

Indeed, citizenship here meant followed a pre-determined path of participation. As most of the testimonies from local residents of affected forests demonstrated, people asked the

government to provide continuous logging as part of the resolution, thus minimizing their relationships to the forest to use and economic stability (C-SPAN 1993). In counter-balance, scientists on the panels referred to the forests as ecosystems and highlighted their scientific worth as anchors to complex and inimitable ecosystems. While this approach may recognize the scientific complexity of old growth forests, it also maintains the language of use-value (ecosystem management implies ecosystem “services”) and the privileging of positive knowledge.

When it emerged from FEMAT, the NWFP was based on the following mission statement and management principles: “The management of these public lands must meet dual needs: the need for forest habitat and the need for forest products” (Record of Decision 1994). The mission dismissed the tension between economic development and ecological protection by promoting them as equally important responsibilities. The guiding principles were:

1. Never forget human and economic dimensions of issues
2. Protect long-term health of forest, wildlife, and watercourses
3. Focus on scientifically sound and ecologically credible strategies
4. Produce a predictable and sustainable level of timber and other resources
5. Ensure that federal agencies work together

Although this policy was among the first in forest management to rest heavily on ecological science instead of traditional forestry economics, the human dimension still sits at the top of the priority list, the economic stability of the timber industry codified in the policy intended to protect biodiversity and old growth from the very same. Polanyi’s argument that nature is a fictitious commodity holds true here. So long as nature is categorized as a commodity, it is not possible to regulate it as a protected area without also regulating it as part of the flow of commodities. Nature viewed as a commodity by

decision-makers enabled policy to protect forests and endangered species by supporting the timber industry. The NWFP tried to protect the forest ecosystems without eliminating industrial logging from the site. So long as the forest is primarily viewed as a commodity, policy will always reflect economic interests, even as those undermine non-economic goals in the same policy.

In a policy outcome like the NWFP, the relationship between humans and nature is maintained in binary. Even though ecological modernization tries to tie the well being of both together, it is trapped in a narrow view of progress as economic growth. Ecological modernization sees humans and nature on parallel paths, not as an intertwined network. The policy required consideration for watersheds and species health, but human need, which is unquestionably economic growth, is central to forest management.

The NWFP made significant changes to public land use management practices, but was undermined by a salvage logging rider on the 1995 Rescissions Act. Logging was rationalized as a way to reap economic benefit from dead and downed trees, lest they “go to waste” in the forest. The rider suspended all environmental protection laws that bound the Forest Service to allow them to expedite salvage timber sales. Salvage logging was considered an emergency response program, and the harvest was set above the programmed level to reduce the backlogged volume of salvageable timber. An internal Forest Service document leaked to the AP Press revealed the deliberate manipulation of the legislation. Supervisors told a Forest Service manager that, “virtually every sale should include salvage in the name...even if a sale is totally green, as long as one board comes off that would qualify as salvage on the Salvage Sale Fund Plan, it should be called salvage. It’s a political thing” (Dorn 1995-1996, p.467). The obvious exploitation

of the Act as a logging loophole is one of many ways in which the rider damaged forest protection. Dorn explained how the logging rider impacted the timber harvest: "A list provided by the Forest Service in late 1995 showed that a total of 96 timber sales totaling 670 million board feet, more than half of the harvest allowed annually under Option 9, could be cut under the industry interpretation of section (k) alone. The Forest Service estimates the rider will increase national timber sales by about 21 percent. [Judge] Hogan's rulings have released substantial amounts of healthy old growth for logging" (Dorn 1995-1996, p.478).

One of the worst impacts on forest management took place in the Siskiyou National Forest, what would become one of the sites most impacted by the Biscuit wildfire:

The long-term, serious effects of the rider and its interpretation in the courts are exemplified by the Elk Fork and Boulder Krab Timber Sales, both located in the lush rain forests of the Siskiyou National Forest in Oregon. These sales were withdrawn under a court order in 1990, but released for cutting in early January by Judge Hogan under the terms of the rider. The sales will clearcut over 200 acres of forest above a stretch of the Elk River that produces the most salmon per mile of any river in the lower 48 states. The sale area is classified as a roadless, old-growth "Forest Reserve" and "Key Watershed" under the President's Option 9 plan. The ecological effects of logging this area may potentially be devastating (Dorn 1995-1996, p.478).

The rider had calamitous effects on timber communities, and Congress succeeded in further polarizing the citizens of the Northwest. In previous years, while timber policy has certainly been contentious, citizens could take action in the courts (Dorn 1995-1996). With the rule of law suspended, the Pacific Northwest has returned to a version of "the

timber wars." Without access to legal recourse, people took to civil disobedience. Dorn noted that resistance to the logging rider made evident that the state deliberately limited public participation: "Dozens of people have been arrested in recent months when protesters have clashed with loggers. The timber industry, on the other hand, favors restricted access to the courts. As a spokesman for the Northwest Forestry Association put it, "[w]hat this legislation did was basically restrict some groups from obstructionist lawsuits." (Dorn 1995-1996, p.479).

These fissures would be split further when the Biscuit fire put additional pressure on those communities already fighting over salvage logging sales. The sales enabled by the rider were often in remote, difficult-to-access, and steep terrain, which required a significant labor and cost burden on the Forest Service, and therefore taxpayers, to make these sales possible for the timber industry (Dorn 1995-1996). The rider left a sizable loophole open for harvesting downed and "problematic" green trees in protected areas (Satterfield 2002, p.36). The rider undermined public trust in the NWFP and land management. The NWFP failed to establish a long-term process by which the varied key stakeholders could continue communication about forest management, fit ailed to solicit local knowledge in a meaningful way, and it failed to create an environment of collaboration through deliberative democratic practices that would result in more than a truce, but rather a network of trust and openness among the previously warring actors.

This compromise to include salvage logging as part of forest management would impact the future of the land burned in the Biscuit wildfire. Salvage logging and thinning were categorized as ecological forest treatments rather than economic, even though logs "salvaged" and thinned were then sold to timber companies. The creative naming of

logging actions highlights the critique that ecological forestry continued to be subsumed by traditional forestry, in practice if not in language. Salvage logging marked another iteration of the commodity view of forests.

### **Producing the Nation through the Production of Timber**

Forest policy has done more than produce a range of commodity uses for trees and biomass. It has also explicitly drawn forests into the project to extend and maintain American military hegemony. This is evident in both the material use of forests, and in the public campaigns connecting forest fires, civic duty, and national security. In 1909 Gifford Pinchot expressed interest in testing wood properties for various applications and manipulations, chief among them for enhanced wood products and military technology. In 1910 under Forest Service Chief Henry Graves, the Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) was established at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Both World Wars inspired a need for research on wood technology and use for wartime application, from timber for planes to charcoal for gas masks (Spartz 2009).

The simultaneous rise of the Weeks Act and of the FPL is a mark of the extension of the power of the Forest Service, and an expansion of the commodification of forests as raw material for nation building and empire expansion. James T. Spartz (2009) wrote a sympathetic celebration of the history of the FPL:

Cline [former FPL director] also strengthened ties to industry. The development of low-cost residential construction standards through World War I and the Great Depression provided shelter for thousands of citizens shifting from rural to urban areas. National defense initiatives were also an early priority for the FPL.

Research into highly absorbent charcoal for gas masks, aircraft engineering, the

effects of humidity and temperature change on wooden and laminate propellers, and wood drying processes began by early 1917. FPL research also made significant contributions to World War II and the Korean Conflict. Support of military efforts continued through the 1960s to the modern era of Desert Storm (p.8).

The FPL was not only strongly committed to using wood for military technology, but it recognized the rural to urban migration of laborers during the war years required cheap, wood-based shelter. The timber industry was part of the rise of the manufacturing sector and the expansion of industrial power. It was an integral feature of the U.S. war effort domestically and technologically. This tight relationship between the timber industry, university research, and the federal government was part of the founding of forest management in the U.S., and persisted in a powerful forms through the major war years.

The FPL further reduced forests to commodities, both commercially and for national security. While Foster, Clark, and York (2010) in *The Ecological Rift* aptly noted that the metabolic rift caused by the timber industry fundamentally altered the nutrient flow in the forest from the natural metabolism to the industrial, they do not scale down to identify specifically how these cycles are altered, and towards what distinct ends within the industrial metabolism. Redirecting forest biomass away from the natural metabolism was part of the expansion of capitalism and international markets for the U.S. as a major industrial power. This was achieved, in part, through their military strength. It emboldened the U.S. as a global police force, which acted out or suggested violence for non-compliance with U.S. economic and diplomatic agendas. Forests became implicated in the rise of the U.S. as a global hegemonic power. With a connection between forests

and U.S. hegemony, the campaigns to protect the forest has far reaching implications beyond balancing profit with protection. The strain between these two policy goals is also in the different approaches to studying forests and making science-based recommendations for land management.

### **The Discourses of Forestry**

#### **Traditional Forestry**

Since the first lumber mills opened in the 1800s, forests have been a driving economic force and a geographic and cultural space of tense relationships, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. During this boom of industrial development, old growth was rapidly cut with little regard for the length of time required for new growth to replace it. Despite the myth of endless forests in the west, big trees became less abundant and accessible. Forest Service Chief Gifford Pinchot addressed this by reserving some forests for non-economic use, setting timber harvest quotas, and managing the forest scientifically for long-term yield rather than short-term profit maximization. Pinchot's intention, however, was not to exclusively protect forests from economic exploitation. Pinchot promoted the application of forestry science to support rational logging (Gonzalez 1998). Emergent forest management influenced by European models in Germany and France were considered by Pinchot and the timber industry to be too "theoretical" and not applicable to on-the-ground forestry (Gonzalez 1998, p.274). His close relationship with major industrialists and timber producers like the Vanderbilts and Weyerhaeuser granted timber interests unparalleled access to shape forest management policy and to ensure that forest conservation was subordinated to the "working forest."

A working forest was in contrast to one of non-use, categories that suggested a forest set aside for non-economic use was inert and fallow. According to Pinchot, a

working forest was cultivated and made productive by industrial-scale intervention. Designing the industrial working forest at the turn of the century was meant to create a sustainable pace of extraction, but instead created a hierarchy of uses for the forest, with industrial economic as the top priority. This ran counter to concerns expressed by Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, whom considered deforestation so destructive it verged on impractical. Almost as an aside, Marx remarked on the utter unsustainability of industrial logging. In *Knock on Wood*, W. Scott Prudham (2005) extracted a fitting quote from Marx's second volume of *Capital* to describe the relationship between time and forestry: "The long production time (which comprises a relatively small period of working time) and the great length of the periods of turnover entailed make forestry an industry of little attraction to private and therefore capitalist enterprise" (p.113). Despite the early observation that deforestation was an unsustainable practice, the application of forestry science and emergent technologies, like chainsaws and railroads, enabled deforestation to proceed at a managed pace.

Academia, the federal government, and the timber industry supported deforestation, which together created the framework of traditional forestry to rationalize, scientifically and economically, the practice that Marx condemned as nearly implausible. As the working forest became the basis for forest policy, the Forest Service acted as a vehicle for managing national forests in the interests of the capitalist class. Pinchot set the stage for a history of forest management policy that would only consider multiple uses of forests without jeopardizing the growth of the timber and wood product industry. Given the impossibility of sustaining a maximally productive working forest, the Forest Service,

acting as state intervention, and took up the charge of mediating the pace of unfettered production and the material limitations of the forest itself.

Forest policy and forest sciences developed concurrently. In 1900, the Yale School of Forestry was founded. It was the first post-graduate forestry school in the U.S. It gained significant financial support from the Pinchot family, as well from Weyerhaeuser, who in 1905 generated funding to establish a Chair of Lumbering at the school (Gonzalez 1998). The Yale School of Forestry influenced the way forests would be studied, with an emphasis on scientific management towards economic development. The school's close relationship with the timber industry and Pinchot's campaign to generate widespread public support for "practical forestry" created a discursive base for subsequent forest management to use forestry science to create conditions for optimal harvesting (Gonzalez 1998). As the Forest Service increased its holding of forest reserves, so too it increased the power of the industrialists over the use of the forests.

This traditional perspective has historically viewed forests as a source of capital. Institutions that favor traditional forestry include the Forest Service, the forestry profession, and the timber industry (Hays 2006). Traditional forestry and the timber industry have been long-time co-conspirators, which has granted the timber industry unprecedented access to the formation of forest policy and forest management since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Samuel P. Hays (2006) described the relationship in detail:

Over the years of the twentieth century, these institutions and their leaders had shaped the scientific and managerial practices in wood production forestry to the extent that the word 'forestry' in both technical and popular language implicitly meant 'wood production.' The forestry leaders and institutions now were so

firmly committed to wood production that, when confronted by the press of the new objectives in environmental and ecological forestry, they had difficulty in accepting them. Often they considered these new ideas as threats to their primary interest in wood production rather than as opportunities to broaden their vision as to what forests constituted and how they were to be managed (p.8).

The Forest Service saw itself as the advocate of the timber industry. Even the Forest Service's interest in sustained yield and long-term harvest at the beginning the 1900s was less about protecting forest ecosystems, and more about their preoccupation with taming the historically "cut and run" timber industry and anchoring it in local communities. The Forest Service was concerned with ensuring that the timber industry would have a long and productive future. Forestry schools often taught students almost exclusively about commercial tree species, not comprehensive forest botany (Hays 2006). Traditional forestry had few qualms about promoting the harvest of large old trees. Old trees were commercially valuable but required at least 100 years of growth before they could be harvested and made profitable. To become a renewable product, forests had to be scientifically managed to produce commercial species in timeframes advantageous to the timber industry.

In the late 1800s, the Forest Service encountered the dilemma of supporting the timber industry's need to intensively log while balancing the need to keep forests alive. The solution was extensive forest management. Hays described the goals of land use: "Equally significant and evolving early in the agency's history was the penchant to eliminate older trees and to replace them with the fully 'regulated forest,' which would be subject to continual careful control from planting to harvest. Sound forest management,

in the eyes of the foresters, could advance only by removing the old to make way for the new” (Hays 2006, p.11). The Forest Service borrowed elements of some European models of forestry to determine the function of forests. Prudham (2005) elaborated:

Drawing on European forestry...sustained yield prescribes the conversion of natural forests to *Normalbaum*, or normal forests. A normal forest has been defined as ‘an *ideally constituted forest* with such volumes of trees of various ages so distributed and growing in such a way that they produce equal annual volumes of produce which can be removed continually without detrimental impacts to future production’ (emphasis added)” (p.155).

Normal forests accounted for commercially valuable species and very little else, and traditional forestry education supported this approach. The triangle of academia, industry, and government ensured that the “normal forest” was not just a management technique, but was a discourse by which forests would be transformed from wild and unprofitable to “normal,” predictable, and highly social. Prudham argued that the normal forest came to guide everyday forest management: “Nevertheless, the fundamental division of labor was established; the state would manage the forest and offer the timber for sale, and private capital would process it into commodities” (Prudham 2005, p.156). This cozy relationship ensured that the alienation between humans and nature would be reified in institutional relationships and official policy.

The language of traditional forestry emphasized trees as commodities. “Traditional forestry had its own distinctive set of concepts and words, such as the stand; board feet or cubic feet; saplings, poles, and sawlogs as stages in the age of trees; economic maturity and biological maturity, all of which revolved around accounting for

and managing trees containing commercial wood fiber” (Hays 2006, p. 53). The commodification of forests through administrative and scientific logics is reminiscent of Polanyi’s assertion that land is not a commodity, but is socially constructed and circulated in the economy as though it were commodifiable. Polanyi’s contention that land is commodified is revealed through the banality of administrative naming and categorization (Polanyi 2001). In contrast and by way of rebuttal, as Hays wrote, ecological forestry spoke a different language. “Ecological forestry introduced new terms associated with species and habitats such as keystone species, management indicator species, microhabitats, understory species, soil mycorrhizae, colonization, and retention” (Hays 2006, p.53). These discourses produced different views of the forest, but sawlogs and board feet were not eliminated from public policy or forestry science. Public policy reflected the mainstream acceptance of ecological forestry.

### **Ecological Forestry**

Ecological forestry has no specific point of entry into the discourse of forest management. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the term “ecology” became a popular way to describe systems of feedback loops where information moved across networks via nodal points, whether that information was computer code or genetic code. Information ecology was taken up as an analogy to explain the vast exchange of information within complex natural systems. In the 1970s and 1980s, reform environmentalism and Deep Ecology popularized the assumption that nature was a self-animating system of feedback loops always seeking stasis. The ecosystem concept is found in environmental policies from National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) to the Wilderness Protection Act of 1964. In the 1990s the language of ecological forestry, often used interchangeably with

conservation forestry and restoration forestry, formed the basis for the “New Forestry” paradigm championed by forest scientist Jerry Franklin (Evans 2006).

Ecological forestry as a scientific and normative orientation produced forests as intrinsically and biologically valuable. Those who took up ecological forestry advocated that management and economic uses of forests required integration with biological systems. Forest management practices, from thinning non-economically valuable tree species, to clearcutting, was considered dangerous to forest health and stability. This approach produced a supplemental discourse to commodity forestry, one that pulled from the biological sciences rather than the language of commodity. Hays (2006) described the new language:

Ecological scientists identified similar issues but usually in more conventional scientific language. They spoke in terms of disturbance and recovery as general concepts; or fragmentation with its implications of habitat; or acid rain as a general biochemical disturbance. The views of scientists were formulated in different venues than those of forest reformers, in different publications and rarely in formal cooperation. Yet the two were continually aware of each other, and reformers enlisted the help of ecologists in drawing up their management proposals. As a result, in the realm of public debate over forest policies, a loose but reinforcing connection evolved between the two streams of ecological thinking about forests (p.20).

The ecological approach relied on science to determine what the forest was, and ecology and conservation biology demanded that human impact on forest health and ecosystems be accounted for in the forest management decision-making process. This concern was

written into NEPA, which institutionalized ecological concerns in environmental management by requiring environmental impact statements to detail how the natural environment would be impacted by human activity. The impact statements had to provide a list of alternative uses of the land, including those favoring ecosystem integrity over satisfying an economic need. Ecological forestry was incorporated into existing forest and environmental management techniques but as a supplement to traditional forestry, not a replacement. Incorporating this language into public policy already shaped by traditional forestry neutralized the possibility of ecological forestry as a mechanism for serious criticism of contemporary forest policy.

The Forest Service, long steeped in its mandate to provide a continuous supply of lumber, struggled to integrate this new discourse. Managing forests to produce a high volume of timber not only satisfied key allies in the timber industry, it also provided a reliable revenue stream from timber sales for the Forest Service. Ecological forestry forced the Forest Service to confront their mandate to manage the forest for multiple uses, including non-economic purposes like recreation and watershed protection. Ecological forestry became a tool of non-profit and citizen groups who sought to protect or change the use of forests. Environmental organizations and citizen groups filed lawsuits requesting injunctions to halt logging until the Forest Service or timber companies complied with NEPA, the Northwest Forest Plan, and other land management legislation. Ecological forestry was directed specifically at preservation of old growth forests, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, which held some of the last old growth in the country. Broadly, ecological forestry did not dismiss the economic use of forests and

was not anti-capitalist. Instead, it was used to integrate the goals of maintaining healthy, biodiverse forests with the need to harvest trees.

Despite new environmentally-friendly language, forest management policy kept at its core the relationships and goals of traditional forestry. The MUSYA remained essentially a program to protect industrial scale tree cutting. Forest policies that followed President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan and the Roadless Area Conservation Rule were gutted under the George W. Bush presidency. During this era, forestry discourses no longer competed for dominance within the same forest policy. Instead, they were merged to produce a more singular goal of protecting economic interests. As ecological forestry was reshaped to fit traditional forestry goals, forests, too, were reshaped by the discursive and physical implications of the convergence of discourses and the practices that followed.

Taken together, traditional forestry and ecological forestry formed a discourse that relied on ecological language to justify commercial activity in forests. Prudham (2005) referred to the joint approach as New Forestry. New Forestry connected traditional units of measure (forest stands) with ecological descriptions of forests (wildlife corridors, waterways, etc.), and broadened restoration from simply regenerating economically valuable tree species to considering whole ecosystems (Prudham 2005). Prudham (2005) described the genesis of New Forestry:

The decidedly interventionist, transformative management orientation of New Forestry was conveyed unequivocally by...Jerry Franklin, who...derided in 1989 the 'unhealthy' division of the Douglas-fir region landscape between commodity production and preservation. Franklin then posed and answered his own question,

prescribing a role in management for the New Forestry: ‘Are there alternatives to the stark choice between tree farms and legal preservation? I believe ecological research is providing us with the basis for such alternatives.’ (p.173).

New Forestry is a reiteration of ecological modernization. The logic of ecological modernization has been part of forest policy since Pinchot’s movement to incorporate ecological values in setting timber harvest levels on national forests. This tension between ecological management and economic management runs through the policy histories of land and fire management.

### **Conclusion**

The history of land management policy reflects a general trend towards recognizing the ecological importance of forests, while still struggling to give priority to ecological health over economic development. A more prominent place for ecology is a positive development, but the efforts to rebrand industrial logging as a responsible land management technique suggests that capitalism is not fading from land management. More dangerously, capitalist logic still frames ecological forestry, which severely limits how much this approach can change the central notion that forests are a national resource, like coal and oil. Even safeguards like the environmental impact statements could be used to make land use decisions that permit damaging economic practices. The Biscuit post-fire logging case is just such an example, where the Final Environmental Impact Statement allowed salvage logging, despite sufficient scientific evidence that this was a degrading practice with no ecological benefit.

As exemplified by policy shaped by ecological modernization, the tension between ecology and economy is resolved by considering the two as complimentary

issues. Instead, ecology and economy should be kept apart, so economic development is not confused for a natural right or inherent part of land management. Smith (2008) is worth quoting at length:

Whether hostile or not, the fact of the externality of nature is enough to legitimate nature's subjugation; indeed this process of subjugation has itself come to be treated as 'natural.' Second, and more important today, is the ideological function of the universal conception. This no longer acts as a 'rhetorical screen' to justify the conquest of external nature, nor a moral vision to stimulate social behavior suitable to the ruling class. These functions have come together. The effect is still one of conquest – or more accurately control – and the target is still social behavior. The overriding function of the universal conception today is to invest certain social behaviors with the status of natural events by which is meant that these behaviors and characteristics are normal, God-given, unchangeable...capitalism is treated not as historically contingent but as an inevitable and universal product of nature...Capitalism is natural; to fight it is to fight human nature (Smith 2008, p.29).

From the abuse of the sustainable yield mandate to the Northwest Forest Plan, the space between ecology and economy has been closing. "Sustainable" in forestry policy means economically stable over a long period rather than practices to sustain the natural environment with minimal required intervention and logging. Clinton's Forest Summit refused to consider tension between ecology and economy; instead, he collapsed the two as equally important goals of forest management. With the growing inseparability of ecology and economy, the work of activism to bring critical attention to and make

substantial changes in policy is all the more difficult without a discursive home base distinctly set apart from the capitalist logic of current forest policy.

In the next chapter, I turn to key moments in the social and political development of fire policy and management. The Biscuit wildfire revealed the tremendous inconsistencies in the policy language of forest health and the scientifically supported practices of deforestation. The ensuing conflict politicized what was becoming an alarmingly seamless merge of economic and ecological conceptions of the forest, and the treatment of clearcutting and aggressive logging as a management approach to forest health. Fire policy takes up some of the same issues as forestry. Problems with modern fire management include a public misconception of forest health and fire cycles, the use of fire management and post-fire remediation to legislate increased cutting, and policy decisions that embedded economic goals in ecological language. These circumstances created the conditions for the Biscuit fire conflict, and what would become an intractable environmental issue emblematic of the battles environmentalists can expect when confronting modern forest policy and industrial logging.

### **Chapter 3: “The Greatest Enemy of the Forest”: Managing Fire on Public Land**

Forest fires create openings, not just in the forest, but also in the working definition of what a forest is. A burned landscape is, depending on the perspective, devastation to the land and view shed; the start of new growth and a part of a forest’s natural lifecycle; an opportunity to salvage log and to extend private claims on public resources; a paycheck for firefighters; and a threat to home and property. Each of these ideas carries a set of political and administrative practices, and the stakeholders of each vie for the opportunity to redesign the landscape in the image of their needs. In the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, fighting among these different identities and perspectives erupted in courtrooms, in the forest, and in academia.

Forest fires have taken up multiple meanings in popular and political discourse. They are often televised and tracked by national and local media. The predominant images are of towering flames, charred trees, plumes of smoke, and of frightened homeowners close to the fire. Fires are depicted as dramatic, destructive, and menacing. Firefighters are dressed as military “rangers” who rush towards danger and attack the advancing enemy. The practices of firefighting, from the militaristic suppression campaigns to the long history of eliminating all fires regardless of their potential benefit to the forest, have maintained fires as intrusions into an otherwise orderly world. The timber industry’s influence remains visible in modern policy, like the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. Among other goals, this policy included thinning and salvage logging as fuels management projects to protect the forest from future, damaging conflagrations. The tight relationship between industry and state has granted the industry

access to land management decisions that others, from ecological scientists to environmentalists, fail to possess.

The industry has even influenced the trend of wildfire intensity of frequency. During the 1950s through the 1970s, the Forest Service had a sufficient infrastructure to intensively manage wildland fires (Ingalsbee 2010). As the 1980s introduced a new era of cutting government spending and shrinking the visibility of government services, firefighting was privatized, which gave the timber industry and associated businesses new economic opportunities. Timothy Ingalsbee (2010) traced a history of fire history and Forest Service approaches:

Up until the 1950s, an average 30 to 40 million acres burned annually in the national forests of the West, but there was no sense of “crisis” during this time...The agency had plenty of incentive to aggressively attack all wildfires and put them out as quickly and cheaply as possible in the post-War period because its budget appropriations centered on its commercial logging program, and wildfires were perceived as threats to the timber resource and the agency’s revenue (p.6).

Ingalsbee made the argument that the increased costs of suppression, and the way the Forest Service perceived fires, was a political maneuver. Strategically, this approach ensured an endless supply of funding for wildfires, and it protected the timber industry. Forest fires, as independent agents, have had a profound effect on how forests are shaped, managed, and considered. Fires allow for forests to be viewed as complex ecosystems with needs, cycles, and activities that must be gently managed with close attention to local context. Fires also enable forests to be viewed as resources whose market price must be protected. As this historical overview will show, the Forest Service and the

timber industry chose to perceive forests as commodities, and utilized fire as a way to exploit changes in the forest itself and to capitalize on and exacerbate the public fear of fire.

### **The Social Construction of Fire**

#### **Fire and Individual Morality**

The sense of moral responsibility to prevent forest fires developed only after fires began to threaten human homes and towns. Frontier fires were generally considered natural events requiring little to no intervention. As nature was increasingly tamed by western settlement, the human / nature relationship began to take on elements of religious and social etiquette. Neil Smith (2008) in *Uneven Development* explored how religious morality was overlaid on the relations between humans and nature.

But just as the vision of a hostile wilderness had its social function – that of legitimizing the attack on nature – so did the vision of a virtuous nature.

According to the conservative historian George Mowry, the enthusiasm for nature and the outdoors represented an ecological nostalgia which ‘was convenient politically for America’s ruling economic classes’ in order ‘to foster the rural virtues’ (p.22).

These virtues were rooted in Christianity, which informed scientific conceptions of space and objects (Smith 2008) and became part of the language of fire management. These virtues revealed the prevailing white, middle-class view of wilderness and land as a representation of purity, an elusive moral characteristic prevalent in Christian thought (Smith, 2008; Cronon, 1995). From John Muir’s writings to the naming of Cathedral Grove of Muir Woods, this sense of western Christian morality became part of the way

land was managed and how the federal government shaped the relationship between citizens and the land.

Forest fires were considered a threat to pristine nature. The Forest Service took them as a sign of human carelessness and un-Christian regard for the great outdoors. Bernard Fernow, the head of the Division of Forestry in the 1890s, blamed the non-stop fires of the turn of the century on “bad habits and loose morals” (Pyne 2001, p.7). The Forest Service attributed fires to Americans’ cavalier attitude towards their responsibility to stop preventable fires, and the Forest Service believed if they informed citizens of the dangers of causing fires, they might instill the right moral disposition in the public. Early American foresters were nearly disgusted by the prevalence of local, human-started fires across the country (Pyne 2001). Reports from the U.S. Geologic Survey were upset to find that every forest bore evidence of fire. Settlers and loggers in the Northeast and Northwest were largely to blame for intentional fires that burned far more forest than was intended.

Not every intentional fire was harmful. Early pre-settlement Native Americans relied on controlled burns to manage forestland (FEIS 2004). The South considered fire a land management tool and resisted the Forest Service’s attempt to eliminate prescribe burns (Pyne 2001). While there was little evidence of runaway controlled fires, it was politically impossible to grant local autonomy to one region while pushing for federal control over others. The only option for the Forest Service was to appropriate land to control behavior. Pinchot recognized the potential for fires to become part of the controlled forest, rather than a threat to stability. Stephen Pyne (2001) quoted Pinchot:

I recall very well indeed...how, in the early days of forest fires, they were considered simply and solely as acts of God, against which any opposition was hopeless and any attempt to control them not merely hopeless but childish. It was assumed that they came in the natural order of things, as inevitably as the seasons of the rising and setting of the sun. To-day we understand that forest fires are wholly within the control of men (p.18).

When fire was no longer read as a natural condition, it was instead met as a product of human behavior that could be managed through federal land management and a shrewd mix of politics and science. In the course of describing fires as controllable, Pinchot conceded that fires were endemic to forests. Only after technology enabled people to control and extinguish fires were they no longer considered a feature of nature, but rather a disturbance of an otherwise orderly world. Controlling fire cycles to better shape the land for economic and recreational use is one way in which forests have been historically considered gifts to human ingenuity and pleasure. Regarding natural cycles as a nuisance facilitates viewing forests as managed plantations. The Forest Service cultivated this attitude, as fires prior to the inception of the agency were generally considered a private property issue or a non-threatening burn in remote wilderness (Pyne 2001).

Wild fires were considered a non-issue prior to the Forest Service when land management agencies were primarily concerned with establishing property rights and loosely managing multiple uses of wild land. Fires were allowed to burn unless they threatened human communities, in which case volunteer fire fighters were rounded up, often from local bars, and then disbanded ("The 1910 Fires," 2013) In 1897 the federal government was enabled to create national forest reserves, which ushered in the era of

state-controlled forests and fire management on public land. When the Forest Service formed in 1905, it was charged with responding to forest fires in a more organized fashion. The Forest History organization explained under what conditions fires were meant to be fought:

Those who were Forest Service permittees in grazing, timber, or power were obligated to fight fires without compensation whenever their permit area was threatened. In fact, officials often listed fire protection as a major justification for issuing permits. In the early publications by the fledgling Forest Service, fire protection was pointed to as the first duty of the agency (“The 1910 Fires,” 2013). Fire fighting was an integral part of the state’s responsibility to manage forests. The state approach to fire fighting paralleled state military campaigns. Just as military conscription required citizens who partake in the benefit of the state to defend the nation against enemies, those who directly benefit from the national forest reserves were similarly required to defend them against dangerous outsiders, like wildfire. Fire management became a public duty, not just a responsibility of the government agencies, landowners, and permit holders. As fire management was increasingly part of the lives of everyday citizens, the subsequent collaboration between the War Ad Council and the Forest Service shaped the public view of fire and fire management policies.

### **The Militarization of Firefighting**

The Forest Service’s military-like hierarchical organization, army inspired uniforms, use of repurposed military technology for firefighting, and the prevailing discourse of fighting a “war on fires” bespoke the Forest Service’s identity as a military operation with a mission of public defense, rather than as a manager of forest ecology.

The Forest Service acquired the kinds of technologies that could only be applied to large-scale, aggressive intervention. It would be difficult to imagine low-impact fire management with a napalm gun and a bomber plane. In his article about wildfire policy, George Busenberg (2004) provided specific context:

Following the Second World War, the Forest Service pursued an aggressive program of mechanized wildland firefighting by air and land. In particular, the use of airplanes and helicopters created new possibilities for airborne wildland firefighting throughout the nation. The Federal Excess Property Program gave the Forest Service access to surplus federal equipment (such as military hardware) and the ability to pass that equipment on to its cooperators. Fears of mass fires set by nuclear weapons led the Forest Service into cooperative fire research efforts with the US Office of Civil Defense (p.131-132).

The relationship between the US Office of Civil Defense and the Forest Service expanded beyond material support. The Forest Service collaborated with that federal agency to create a public campaign that linked forest fires to national security, specifically the villains of World War II: The Japanese and the German armies. Capitalizing on the 1941-1942 Pearl Harbor attack and the fire in the Los Padres National Forest from heavy shelling by the Japanese military, the public service campaign asked citizens to protect the homeland by staying vigilant against forest fires, which they claimed aided the enemy, regardless if the fire was caused by military fighting or from recreational negligence. In an effort to unify the public and to give civilians a sense of obligation to the United States, the campaigns featured caricatured Japanese and German soldiers, as well as those of Emperor Hirohito and Adolf Hitler, usually holding a match

in front of a forest, grinning in anticipation of gaining military advantage through the destruction of forestland. Text warned, “Forest fires aid the enemy,” “Our carelessness, their secret weapon,” and “Careless matches and the Axis: Prevent forest fires.” These ads were created by the War Advertising Council in collaboration with the Forest Service (“Smokey the Bear”). (See Appendix A).

One underlying message was that forest fire prevention was part of a citizen’s individual responsibility, both to avoid careless mistakes that could cause a fire, and to police their neighbors for the same. Preventing accidental fires could help win the war. The campaigns didn’t argue that forests were a special feature of the U.S. landscape: they instead considered them a critical element of wartime technology and an important commodity to the global economy. Citizens were meant to protect a commodity, not an ecosystem, and if the campaigns could be believed, the global enemies rightly recognized forests as a feature of a strong United States economy. The public message that forests were meant to be fire-free softened in tone after the War. The Forest Service relied on cultural messaging and appealed to the growing value of forests as sites of recreation, as well as of economic development.

Just as fire was considered by the Forest Service to be a threat to private profit, fire was antithetical to the idea of forests as peaceful places of wilderness, aesthetic enjoyment, and recreation. Disney films like “Bambi” perpetuated the demonization of forest fires by showing an out of control fire consuming the protagonist’s mother. Playing on the presumed deep connection between children and their mothers, “Bambi” inspired fear of a burning forest and sympathy for forest dwelling creatures threatened by fire. Deer were rightfully in the forest, but fires were not. The federal government took part in

shaping the public discourse around fires as well. Just like other wartime campaigns, the public was implicated in the responsibility to fight the enemy.

In 1944, the Forest Service introduced Smokey the Bear, an anthropomorphized bear in a jaunty Forest Service uniform, who notified the public that “only YOU can prevent forest fires,” a warning and command not dissimilar from the Uncle Sam wartime campaign “I want YOU for the US Army” (“Smokey the Bear”). Smokey the Bear encouraged people to be cautious about extinguishing their campfires and to be mindful about flicking smoldering cigarette butts into the wild, where even this small artifact from the human world could send the natural world reeling. The campaign made forest fires personal. Not only were fires a threat to forests and people, individuals would not be able to encounter the forest without also thinking about the potential for a destructive fire. Forest fires were unnatural if caused by human activity, but natural if caused by lightning strike. Forest fires separated into natural and unnatural categories influenced how policy guided land management agencies about which fires to fight and which to allow to burn.

Multiple state agendas were satisfied through these ad campaigns: A continued assertion that forest fires were to be feared; a linkage between forest fires and national security that encouraged an aggressive fire suppression regime, which also strengthened the need for the Forest Service to protect national interests and the national economy through their valued fire fighting services; to encourage support for unlimited spending on Forest Service fire suppression; to forge a connection between forests and their commodity value; and to strengthen civilian patriotism and resolve to combat the enemy without enlisting in the military.

The fear of fire is used for multiple purposes, from justification for a strong Forest Service, to rationalizing logging as part of fuels control. These connections confirmed the attitude that the Forest Service was in a perpetual war on fires, and it clinched a connection between the timber industry and national security. These perspectives are also visible in public policy. From the first Forest Service Chiefs to the public outcry after severe wildfires on public land in the early 1900s, forest management actively tried to remove fire from the landscape by marshaling serious public funding and labor, while selectively choosing forestry research to support their vision of fire suppression and a controlled wildland. This next section will examine the different views of fire and the uses of forests that profoundly shaped fire management, and how the cultural and political foundation of fire management continues to influence policy decisions.

### **Historical Overview of Fire Policy and Fire Management Trends**

#### **The Big Blowup**

Just five years after the Forest Service was created, the new agency was rocked by one of the worst wildfire seasons in history. The Big Blowup and the period of industrialization that preceded it were marked by continual fire. Dubbed “The Great Barbeque” by historian V.L. Parrington, ignition sources from sparks thrown by locomotives to brush leftover from massive clearcuts made forests vulnerable to burns outside of natural fire cycles (Pyne 2001). These fires burned at a time when the Forest Service had yet to meet its promise to eliminate fires from forests. The Forest Service fire fighters struggled to contain the burns, and President Taft had to call in over 4,000 soldiers to assist in the effort (“The 1910 Fires,” 2013). The public perceived fires to be a last stage before the settlement of the wild, and the development of towns and industry

would eliminate them from the landscape. Loggers were compelled to consume trees before the fires hastily razed forests and incinerated their economic opportunities. The Big Blowup was a sharp reminder that fires were still possible, dangerous, and hard to manage. Stephen Pyne (2001) described the impact of these fires on the institutional makeup of the Forest Service:

Meanwhile the young U.S. Forestry Service had the memory of the conflagrations spliced into its institutional genes, shaped as profoundly by the Great Fires as modern China by the Long March. Not for more than 30 years, until its founding generation had passed from the scene, would the trauma of the 1910 fires begin to deal and would the nation's leading agency for administering wildlands would consider fire as anything but a hostile force to be fought to the death (p.3).

The Big Blowup solidified the public fear of fire, and the impossibility of an agency as small as the Forest Service combating fires of that magnitude became a useful platform to call for the expansion of the Forest Service and their subsequent unlimited funding for firefighting. The Big Blowup became a useful reference point for the Forest Service as Pinchot worked to expand their land holdings, power, and budgetary resources. The argument for a bigger Forest Service rested on a moral call to protect people and firefighters from conflagrations, to safeguard a commodity significant to the national economy as well as to settlement and expansion, and to assert the federal government's legitimacy as the arbiter of the relationship between economic activity and preservation and safety. Pinchot's vast influence over the first school of forestry in the U.S., largely funded by timber interests (Gonzalez 1998), all but insured that scientific forestry

research would be in support of timber-friendly policies, and policies that expanded the reach of and deepened the need for the Forest Service.

### **Forest Service Debate over Land Management Approaches**

The young Forest Service struggled to design a federal fire management policy that would satisfy a public spooked by the recent large fires. Pinchot and Bernard Fernow, who would assume the role of Chief following Pinchot, made arguments for a strong centralized control over forests and a mandate to suppress fires. Major John Wesley Powell, director of the U.S. Geological Survey in the 1880s, countered them with two significant claims: First, that local oversight and management was superior to federal. This destabilized the argument that the Forest Service needed expanded jurisdiction and federal funding. He argued that local communities best knew what they needed from the landscape for development and survival, and should manage the land their way, including the use of fire. While the argument appears to favor local conservation, the opposite is true. Powell's second major claim was that forests were a detriment to the other ecosystem services upon which human communities were dependent. Fernow recalled:

...Major Powell launched into a long dissertation to show that the claim of the favorable influence of forest cover on water flow or climate was untenable, that the best thing to do for the Rocky Mountain forests was to burn them down, and he related with great gusto how he himself had started a fire that swept over a thousand square miles (Pyne 2001, p.9-10).

Powell's logic ran counter to that of Pinchot and Fernow. Rather than protecting forests from fire, he proposed to protect land from forests, and in the process eliminate the

threats from fire. While Powell's land management vision did not take hold, his insistence on local land control persisted as a counter-position to the tremendous holdings of the Forest Service and its European style of forestry. However, the social and economic impact of the 1908 fires and the Big Blow Up positioned the Forest Service to take on even more land holdings and solidified its role as the national firefighters.

Pinchot's successor and the first dean of the Yale School of Forestry, Henry Solon Graves, commissioned a study on fire management, which convinced him of the need for a strong fire suppression program (Stephens & Ruth 2005). Despite scientific research that supported limited light fire starting, this view was inherited by the third Forest Service Chief William Greeley, who stated “‘the conviction [that] was burned into me is that fire prevention is the number 1 job of American foresters’ (Greeley 1951: 23)” (Stephens & Ruth 2005, p.533). Greeley was so fire-averse that he advocated razing forests to prevent wildfires; a kind of perverse logic that eroded the “sustainable yield” concerns that governed Pinchot's policies.

### **Early Fire Management Policy**

In the wake of the Big Blowup, The Weeks Act of 1911 reflected the national anxiety about wildfire. The prevailing logic of the Weeks Act was that the Forest Service should, and could, suppress all fires. Despite emergent research from the Yale School of Forestry that fires were a vital part of forest ecology (Gonzalez 1998), Forest Service Chiefs Pinchot and his successor Henry Solon Graves based policy decisions on scientific research that supported fire suppression. An article from the Forest History website described the use of the Forest Service's funding:

Section 2 of the law made provisions for fighting forest fires with the cooperation of the states. The Weeks Act set aside \$200,000 in matching funds to be distributed to states with forest protection agencies. Those forestry agencies could then apply for up to \$10,000 to be used for fire patrolmen salaries, provided the state would match the amount. Cooperation with the Forest Service's State and Private Forestry branch on fire problems later evolved into efforts on insect control and forest diseases. The funding also encouraged several states to establish or expand state forest ("Weeks Act: Protection and restoration" 2013). Rather than invest in fire ecology research, the Weeks Act made a bold yet politically popular statement that fires were categorically catastrophic and suppression was a national priority (Stephens & Ruth 2005). State fire suppression efforts received nearly unlimited financial support from Congress, which suggested that the benefit of fire fighting could not be quantified. Busenberg argued that emergency funding was taken advantage of by the Forest Service: "This emergency-spending provision provided a method for the Forest Service to expend funds for firefighting that far exceeded its annual appropriations for that purpose" (Busenberg 2004, p.149). The nearly unlimited financial support from Congress incentivized the Forest Service to maintain a firm position on fire as a threat to national security and to ecology.

Thus began a long era of suppression, supported by public campaigns that inspired fear of fires. As Chief Graves stated, "'the first measure necessary for the successful practice of forestry is the protection from fire' (Graves 1910: 7, Pyne 1982)" (Stephens & Ruth 2005). This position was strengthened in the Clarke-McNary Act of 1924, which expanded the Weeks Act and the discretion of the Forest Service. The

Clarke-McNary Act allowed the Forest Service to purchase lands that were near watersheds, not just the headwaters of navigable streams. As Stephens and Ruth (2005) point out, “Passage of the federal Clarke-McNary Act in 1924 tied federal appropriations to the state first adopting fire-suppression and this law effectively created a national fire-suppression policy” (p.533).

In 1935, Forest Service Chief Ferdinand Silcox established the infamous 10 am policy that required all fires to be extinguished by 10 o’clock the morning following their first report. This policy encouraged the public fear of wildfire and willfully ignored research on the ecological benefits of light burning as a fire management approach. It also did not acknowledge the evidence of wildfires as a necessary component of a healthy forest (Pyne 2001). The 10 am policy required tremendous labor and resources, both of which were satisfied by the federal government. The Civilian Conservation Corp provided men to fight fires, while the Clarke-McNary Act provided the basis for unlimited spending by the Forest Service for firefighting. Fire suppression policies strengthened each other and the perspectives written into them. Busenberg (2004) explained how certain approaches became fixed over decades of policy decisions:

...The choice of the wildfire suppression policy displayed a pattern of selective attention to relevant information (bounded rationality). This choice focused attention on fire suppression while failing to focus attention on fuel management, thereby establishing a self-defeating public policy. Wildfire suppression therefore commanded the attention of the Forest Service during this critical period of policy formation (Agee, 1993; Carle, 2002; Pyne, 2001). For more than five decades thereafter, fire suppression (rather than fuels reduction) would remain the central

focus of attention in the Forest Service's fire management and research programs (Pyne, 1982) (p.148).

Indeed, the Forest Service paid special attention to those studies coming from the Yale School of Forestry that supported an aggressive firefighting regime. The Forest Service's "selective attention to relevant information" demonstrated that fire policy did not happen by chance, or by a poor but well-meaning choice of approaches. Fire policy was formed by politically motivated, intentional decisions. Policy was also strongly influenced by the potential public relations problems that might arise if fires were left uncontrolled and claimed homes and human lives. The foundation set by the Weeks Act had strong influence over the Clarke-McNary Act of 1924.

The Clarke-McNary Act marked a transition point between exclusive fire suppression and limited light burning and fire management. Local landowners had for decades relied on controlled burning to manage fuel loads in forests, particularly in the South. As Pyne (2001) noted, it was an essential practice: "Old farmers burned fallow. New settlers fired the woods to make fields. Herders torched stale pasture. The hard fact was, agriculture could not thrive without some regimen of burning, and folk culture not only accepted but celebrated that reality" (p.5). The first prescribed fires on federal land took place in Florida's Osecola National Forest in 1943, and were followed with expanded research in prescribed burning in the southwest and western United States (Stephens & Ruth 2005).

Decades of fire suppression created forests with the capacity for tremendous burns, rather than forests that followed natural fire cycles. In national forests, time lags between fires widened. One consequence of this was that the low to moderate severity

burns that naturally managed fuel loads would happen less frequently. The absence of these burns would leave a dangerous build-up of biomass that produce a high severity fire. As the next section will demonstrate, these policy mistakes would later impact modern approaches to forestry. Indeed, the historical precedents set by the early Forest Service left its mark on the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, and made it particularly susceptible to a fire the size and intensity of the Biscuit.

### **Impacts of Historical Fire Policies**

Decisions made by Congress and the Forest Service between 1905 and 1911 established a national fire attitude, policy response, and scientific basis for suppressing wildfire. Now widely considered a poor basis for fire management, the policy determinations made in this timeframe mark an important discursive and political moment in forest management. George Busenborg (2004) described the impact of these decisions:

The years 1905 through 1911 constituted a critical period in the formation of federal wildfire policy. The issue definitions and institutional arrangements established in this period structured US wildfire policy for much of the twentieth century. It was during this critical period that the federal government established the issue definition of wildfire suppression, and created the basic institutional arrangements that would allow the policy of wildfire suppression to be implemented throughout the nation (p.148).

These policies captured the public fear of fires, the need to establish a purpose for the new Forest Service, and legitimized the flow of forestry research sympathetic to industry needs towards Forest Service decisions and public policy. While fire policy is not

reducible to a few individuals, the policy logic and hardline stance against forest fires from this critical period provided the basis for escalating fire suppression. Found in these policies was a tendency to view forests as controllable, and a prioritization of anthropocentric uses, from resource extraction to recreation, over ecological consideration. Although an alternative to this approach need not embody Muir's proto-deep ecological reverence for "pure" nature, the current condition of unusually hot and powerful fires is in large part due to the historical mismanagement of fires in forests.

These early forest management policies set the perspectives available for making future land use decisions. Busenberg (2004) underscored the point: "The origins of this policy failure can be traced back to the period 1905 through 1911, when the federal government established an issue definition of aggressive wildfire suppression and the institutional arrangements necessary to implement this policy (Pyne, 1982)" (p.146). The policies were created within a framework that emphasized research to support a perspective on fire management that rationalized the expansion and funding of the Forest Service. The long history of fire suppression in public policy suggests that a major political or natural event would be required to change the prevailing logic governing land management.

The logic behind the Weeks Act of 1911 and the Clarke-McNary Act of 1924 persist in modern legislation, in part, because policy can be incredibly difficult to reverse or change once it has been codified into law: "Policy failures can persist for decades as the institutional legacies of critical periods" (Busenberg 2004, p.147). Busenberg (2004) concedes that these policy failures are not just some well-meaning error reified too many times to easily change. "Over time, the members of a policy network will often seek

additional resources and influence to pursue their established policy goals” (p.147).

Selective research, the interests of timber companies, and the Forest Service’s own aversion to fire help account for the persistence of these policies. The drive towards fire suppression came from within the Forest Service and from public pressure for protection against fires and smoke.

Wildfires are a public, visible disaster. To support natural fires or to start them would give the impression of carelessness on the part of the Forest Service. Maintenance, like clearing brush to prevent large-scale fires, did not send the right message to the public that fires were a matter of national security, as Busenberg (2004) explained: “Furthermore, the immediate risk of wildfire damages was a more urgent and visible concern in this period than the eventual risk posed by gradual fuel accumulations” (p.150). In these early decades of the Forest Service, fires were viewed as a threat to human needs, from wood products to homes. Even several decades later, former Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth (2004) echoed that sentiment: “Our first priority, of course, is firefighter and public safety, but letting nature take its own course would not enhance human safety. Instead, it would heighten the lethal risk from huge fires like Biscuit in 2002 or Cedar in 2003” (p.6). Bosworth acknowledged that there is an appropriate place for fire in the forest ecosystem, and admitted that light burning by the Forest Service accounted for more burned acres than wildfires (Bosworth 2004). He conceded that the Forest Service no longer abided by the “war on fire” paradigm, but his promise that human habitats are the first priority in fire fighting maintains the assumption that human needs, economic or housing expansion, is more important than ecological stability; arguably more important to human healthy and happiness than golf courses and housing

development. Bosworth also perpetuates the argument laid by the early Forest Service that his agency is the only organization capable of protecting human lives during a forest fire. He dismissed the solution of letting forests, and by proxy forest fires, take a natural course without interference. Bosworth (2004) in an exasperated tone explained:

A policy of allowing all fires to burn would be just as flawed as the old policy of putting them all out. Would that it were so simple. Some would have us believe that if we just stop fighting fire, everything will be fine (Stahl 2004). Never mind the people who will lose their homes-they supposedly deserve it. Never mind the habitat loss for plants and animals-nature supposedly knows best. Just look, they say, at how the American Indians lived with fire...Indians using the site had burned the surrounding woods for centuries, perhaps to keep big fires from wiping out their camps in a drought...Apparently, these Indians did not believe that nature knows best. In fact, Indians nationwide used fire and other technologies to shape ecosystems to their liking (p.4).

Bosworth regarded Native Americans as the original land managers, and in so doing did not problematize the long-standing history of lumping the diversity of First Peoples into one universal category of “The Native Americans,” and therefore did not spend time investigating the range of land management techniques employed by various peoples at various points in human and ecological history. Further, Bosworth claimed that because Native Americans altered the landscape to suit their needs, those descended from colonizing powers that currently manage public land have “permission” to do the same at a scale befitting the size of the population and the scope of power of the federal government. This ahistorical treatment of Native Americans and land management serves

as a superficial justification for forest policy that fails to reorder social necessity in order for ecological health to receive greater attention and oversight.

While Bosworth described the purposes of fire management in more ecological terms than that of fear or war, he echoed his predecessors' view that protecting humans from forest fires is the top priority of the Forest Service. This perspective strengthens Busenberg's argument that the founding ideas, assumptions, and special interests written into the original fire management policies have survived centuries' worth of context changes and updated science.

### **Forestry Science and Public Policy**

The discourse of traditional forestry and the close relationship among the timber industry, forestry science, and the state (primarily through the Forest Service, but also through the BLM) meant forests were managed within the framework of capitalism. Capitalism was considered “at home” in the forest, while forest fires were viewed as threatening to the economic value of trees, the vitality of forests (which produced economically valuable trees), and human habitation. Fires did not belong in the forest. Traditional forestry in the United States approached them primarily as a natural resource and unquestionably part of the industrialization effort for the country (Hays 2006). Early forestry schools in the U.S. were modeled after forestry in Europe, particularly Germany, which managed some forests as *Normalbaum* (Gonzalez 1998). These forests were heavily managed to produce economically valuable trees, and replanting efforts reordered the geography and growth patterns so forest function and form resembled tree farms more than wild forests. While not characteristic of all forest management in Europe, or Germany, this approach was very influential in the foundation of forest management and

science in the U.S. in the late 1800s and 1900s. According to Samuel Hays (2006), traditional forestry taught in universities emphasized the study of economically valuable tree and plant species. Forest management would prioritize maximizing economic gain from forests and trees. The science of forestry and the economics of deforestation were inextricably bound together. This traditional approach produced forests within the framework of capitalism and supported the conversion of forests to commodities through scientific practice and knowledge.

As ecological forestry gained traction, it had a significant impact on fire management policy. Ecological forestry looked at forests from an ecosystems perspective. Ecosystems science studied the interconnection among species, habitats, the composition of the forest, the relationships among healthy ecosystems, the ability for species to proceed along their evolutionary pathways, and vibrant biodiversity. Viewing forests primarily as ecosystems changed the way forests were managed (Hays 2006). Ecosystems were vulnerable to the severe disturbances created by industrial logging and clearcutting. When reconsidered within the discourse of ecological forestry, these practices could no longer be championed for their efficiency and speed. Industrial logging with heavy machinery compacted and disturbed soil; clear cutting trees from mountainsides created the conditions for destructive mudslides and landslides; and logging destabilized ecosystems, habitats, and undermined the forest's ability to regenerate. Not only was the speed of capitalism's consumption of trees problematic, but the mechanisms by which it did came under scrutiny, too.

Public policy was influenced by this emergent discourse, particularly when research showed that fire suppression policies had produced forests less resistant to fires

(Wuerthener 2006). Instead of categorized as a threat to forest health, fires were brought into the discursive field of the forest. Ecological forestry recognized fires as part of a forest lifecycle. This was further demonstrated in research that showed that some species of trees and plants required the intense heat of fires to open their seeds so they could regenerate (Maser 2005). Dead and fire-damaged trees were habitats for creatures that required certain wood conditions in order to thrive. Downed and dead trees became part of the nutrient cycle of the forest (Wuerthener 2006). Natural fires belonged in the forest, so long as they didn't threaten human habitation or life. Fire management policy changed in response to this new research, and the Forest Service finally considered the 10 am suppression policy a failure (Pyne 2001). The 1970s saw a change in fire policy to prescribed burning rather than suppression. The influence of ecological forestry had, temporarily, gained more traction in public policy than traditional forestry.

Prescribed burning over the next couple of decades called for letting wild fires or natural fires burn without intervention so long as they did not grow “out of control,” a designation that was determined by the Forest Service. If a fire became dangerous it would be suppressed. In theory this approach restored fire to the forest. However, it also meant that fires would not be addressed until they became incredible challenges to the Forest Service. Instead of containing a fire while it was still manageable, fires would not be suppressed until they were already considered out of control (Pyne 2001). This put the Forest Service firefighters at tremendous personal risk and made firefighting all the more expensive. Serious burns like Yellowstone National Park in 1988 and others that claimed several lives made the prescribed burn era short-lived (Pyne 2001).

The public still feared fires, especially those close to human communities, and the aesthetic imprint of fire in the iconic Yellowstone National Park magnified the public distaste for wild fire. The Forest Service tried a mixed methods approach of balancing prescribed burning for smaller fires, fire suppression for bigger fires, and managing forests to limit fires. The clash of perspectives on fire, and the competing discourses of forestry, made for disjointed and ineffective fire policy. Fire became such a significant part of the Forest Service's mission and budget that it was nearly impossible for the agency to redesign policy to reduce their level of attention and aggressive response. Managing fires did more than protect trees as commodities. It created a new market for fire fighting itself.

### **The Political Economy of Modern Fire Management**

#### **The Business of Forest Fires**

As forest fires became a public concern at the beginning of the 20th century, fires and forestry increasingly were considered within the same policies. Fires have been a mixed blessing to the timber industry. They consumed future profits, but fire fighting required road building, and roads made forests ineligible for protection as inventoried roadless areas. These twin impacts on the timber industry are reflected in modern public policy. Aggressive fire suppression remains a default response (Ingalsbee 2010), and the industry has actively pushed for post-fire salvage logging to be included in public policy (“Uncontrolled litigation, uncontrolled fires”). Socially, forest fires are unpopular, an attitude instilled in the public through national security campaigns and in popular culture. This fear, however, has done little to discourage exurban growth into wildland boundary areas. The Forest Service has enabled this trend by promising a swift and powerful

response to fires that threaten this interface area. Timothy Ingalsbee (2010) provided some perspective:

Next to total fire size, the presence of private property or human structures in the vicinity of wildfires is the other factor most affecting the rise in suppression costs. Fire managers speculate that up to half of total suppression expenditures are related to private property protection in the WUI [wildland/urban interface]. Over 44 million homes in the U.S. are currently located in fire-prone WUI areas, but the Forest Service predicts a 40% increase in new homes in the WUI by 2030 which some studies estimate could raise annual suppression costs from \$2 to 4 billion (p.3).

The addition of houses to fire-prone areas, if alternatives are not considered, means a surge of aggressive fire suppression efforts at great expense and danger to fire fighters. Fires, therefore, can be tamed enough to safely cohabit with, but fearsome enough to justify incredible spending efforts to protect ourselves from them. Increased costs of fire suppression can be traced back to the 1980s and the move to privatize public services.

The neoliberal turn in the United States, ushered in by President Reagan in the 1980s, resulted in the privatization of fire fighting services. Businesses beyond timber companies had a stake in how much was spent on fire fighting, and how big fire fighting campaigns would be. Small, low technology fire management efforts would not produce the same business opportunities as major campaigns that called for fire retardant dumps, bulldozing fire lines, and sending enough fire fighters into the field to warrant setting up temporary camps (Ingalsbee 2010). Besides companies prepared to outfit fire fighters, timber companies were eager to log in a post-fire forest. Fire fighting typically requires

building roads where none had previously existed, in areas with prior protection as roadless wilderness. The introduction of fire roads changes that designation and the level of protection afforded a particular forest. Trees cut for fire lines and trees considered fire-killed or significantly charred also creates opportunity to turn a wilderness area into a commodity. Ecologists and activists have called the business of fire fighting “the industrial-fire complex,” and while fire management does not exclusively represent business interests, it is far from an apolitical backdrop to the story of the Biscuit.

Among those with a financial stake in aggressive fire fighting are companies that sell equipment and fire retardant, those who ranch and manage livestock, the timber and wood products industries, firefighters, and real estate interests (Kodas 2013). All of these groups benefit from land management that requires thinning, and for fires to be fought rather than permitted to burn. During the year of the Biscuit burn in 2002, *The Economist* magazine reported on the “fire industrial complex” and the influence of fire management policy:

A less vocal group which plainly has no interest in reducing the number of fires is what might be called the “fire-industrial” complex. A big fire can chew up several million dollars a day; the current tab in Oregon is already \$50m. Relatively little of that goes to the Nomex-clad fire-fighters shown battling heroically on the evening news. Most of them make \$14 an hour, or work on a volunteer basis. The serious money goes to an entourage of private contractors, who supply everything from earth-moving equipment and helicopters to portable showers. Nine companies control a fleet of 40 fixed-wing aircraft; it costs around \$6,000 an hour to rent them. The same group of people travel from one blaze to the next. Such

services are all, of course, badly needed. But their existence makes it easy for the Forest Service to stick to its reactive “big-iron” approach to fire control; and their pull on resources leaves ever less money for more mundane forms of fire prevention, such as spending \$2,000 an acre to pay people to chop down overgrown trees and brush (2002).

The fire-industrial complex is an unfriendly reminder that public policy often reflects business interests, and business interests have, since the beginning of forest management in the United States, driven land use policy. The commodification of the forest is not a relatively new trend, but profiting from fire fighting cloaks capitalizing the forest in the language of ecology and conservation. Although both aggressive fire suppression and misguided “let it burn” policies have proven ineffective, their failures are deeper than miscalculation.

Timothy Ingalsbee has long studied the political drivers behind fire and forest management policy. In 2011, he published an article outlining why fire suppression costs have been steadily on the rise, and what perverse motivations exist for supporting expensive fire fighting strategies. He claimed the use of private contractors for crew, aircraft, supplies, and services “typically account for over half of total expenditures on large wildfire suppression incidents” (Ingalsbee 2011, p.4). He does not believe this is a cost effective approach, but instead it is a politically motivated act to profit from fire while the federal government claims to be reducing its size and spending. Ingalsbee (2011) further explained:

The privatization of firefighting has been driven largely by political and ideological interests seeking to shrink the size of the federal workforce, and has

been sustained by the promise that private businesses would provide cheaper, better, more efficient service. However, private contractors not only cost more than public agency crews, but there have been concerns about the inferior work performance of some contractors whose lack of productivity (e.g. fireline construction) also raises suppression costs (p.4).

The use of private contractors has increased expenditures at all levels of government on wild fire suppression: “Contractors now represent the major cost center in firefighting, accounting for an average 56% of suppression costs on large wildfires. During the \$1.6 billion dollar 2002 fire season, two-thirds of suppression costs on large wildfires went to contractors” and “studies from the Pacific Northwest, for example, have shown that federal firefighting crews cost approximately 70% that of a private contract crew” (Ingalsbee 2010, p.15-16). These figure demonstrate that fire management doesn’t have to be efficient, or cost-effective, for it to be bankrolled by Congress. If fire fighting is growing more expensive as it becomes privatized, then this trend does not appear to be made in the public interest. Fire fighting, like post-fire land management, is an economic opportunity to extend access to the private sector to profit from the commons. The increasing frequency of forest fire means one can expect a strong interest from private contractors and the timber industry in adaptations in fire management policy.

Given the level of access to decision makers and the long-standing perspective within the federal government that forests are commodities, significant pressure from within and from outside of the Forest Service would need to mobilize with alternatives. After the fire, the politicization of an event continues. How to address a forest in the aftermath of a conflagration is just as contested as the other aspects of fire management.

Fire has the potential to change forest composition enough to warrant re-categorization, and to downgrade a protected area to one available for logging. Salvage logging is a particularly controversial post-fire management technique, and was the reason for the tremendous conflict in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest.

### **Politicizing Salvage Logging**

According to conventional forestry wisdom, post-fire salvage logging is beneficial to a recovering forest after a significant event because it removes fuels that could start a fire in an already damaged forest system. Salvage logging prepares the ground for reseeding the tree species used in wood products production, and takes advantage of trees typically considered of marginal ecological value (those that are decaying or dead) and redirects them as raw materials for industrial processing (Sessions, et.al. 2004). However, forestry influenced by the rise of ecological science in the 1970s-1990s view salvage logging of little benefit to restoration after a fire because it damages already fragile ecosystems. Salvage logging, whether conducted with heavy equipment or by helicopter, damages soil, exacerbates conditions for erosion and landslides, disturbs water ways and fish runs, buries streams under debris, and removes trees that are part of the forest's natural restoration system (Lindenmayer, Burton & Franklin 2008). Salvage logging in the Biscuit was especially controversial because the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest is considered one of the most ecologically diverse forests in the Pacific Northwest. The scientific battle over post-fire salvage logging, along with concern for economic gains from salvage logging, shaped the subsequent lawsuits and fighting among organizations. The timber industry favored salvage logging, because it enabled logging in places they typically couldn't access, especially to big trees that could dubiously be labeled charred

or fire-killed. The preference for salvage logging found its way into modern legislation, despite protestations from environmentalist organizations.

### **Healthy Forests through Logging**

In 2002, President George W. Bush stood at the site of the extinguished Squires Fire (although staged to appear as though he were standing in the still active Biscuit Fire) and, while crumbling charred bark in his hand, announced his plan for the Healthy Forests Restoration Initiative (Vaughn & Cortner 2005). Bush used the location of a fire as a visual public statement that fires were dangerous, destructive, and threatened forest health. This presented a critical discursive shift within forest and fire management policy from fires as natural but potentially threatening, to fires at odds with forest ecosystems. This shift not only removed fires from the discursive field of what characterized a forest, but it did so from within the language of ecological forestry, which had earlier been responsible for placing fires within the discourse of forests.

HFRA utilized ecological forestry to describe forests in terms of health and bodies. Forests were described as ecosystems, and forest health, not forest management, became a national priority. Forest health included managing forests to reduce the potential for fires. Fire management meant reducing matter considered “hazardous biofuels” which included woody mass, shrubs, brush, live and dead trees, which included big trees. Biofuels also were reclassified outside of the concept of the forest; they didn’t belong inside of a healthy forest. Biofuels, particularly hazardous trees, could be sold to private timber companies (HFRA 2003). Biofuels could similarly be sold for the right kind of fire: combustion to produce consumer energy. Biological matter from forests was redirected from fuel for natural fires to fuel for industrial fires (Pyne 2001).

Critically, HFRA re-categorized fire management as an emergency condition, which meant that decisions and actions to protect certain forests and communities from wildfire could be taken without undergoing an Environmental Impact Statement as required by NEPA, and opportunities for public input and for filing injunctions or lawsuits against Forest Service decisions were severely curtailed. Fire prevention became a discursive tool for closing forest management from public participation and public concern for non-economic use of forests. HFRA did not address specific firefighting techniques or create a new federal policy for how fires would be treated and extinguished. Instead, HFRA mobilized the discourse of fires as dangerous to humans towards opening up forests to extraction and logging without the cultural baggage of the terms “extraction” and “logging”.

Although the general public is not categorically opposed to logging, an increase in the removal of material from the forest still runs against the idea of sustained yield. Making forests more vulnerable to logging interests must sidestep the confrontation between the discourse of sustainability and the discourse of unfettered expansion of capitalism. HFRA managed to avoid this confrontation by appropriating the language of ecological forestry to describe concern for forest health, and by deploying the fear of forest fire to justify changes to forest management. HFRA’s masterful subsumption of ecological forestry towards economic management persists today, and characterizes the kinds of resistance directed at the healthy forests legislation.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter argues that the history of fire policy made it possible for the Rogue-Siskiyou to be salvage logged. The Biscuit fire controversy started almost a century

before the first flames, when the early Forest Service and the timber industry laid the groundwork for the future of fire management and perceptions of fire. When Gifford Pinchot introduced sustainable yield and conservation into land management, he softened the rapacious logging efforts that preceded him, but he set into motion decades of forestry that would conflate ecological conservation with ecological modernization. In modern forest management, the timber industry does not need to pursue “naked capitalism,” it only needs to support profitable management techniques that include thinning, biofuels, and salvage.

As the Biscuit case study shows, the language to rationalize salvage logging is often that of forest restoration, health, and protection from fires. Fire policy has been successfully integrated ecological language with industrial extraction, while using the threat of uncontrollable fire to earn Congressional and public support for these practices. Meanwhile, fire remains caught between being considered a natural, healthy feature of a forest, and a terrorizing, destructive force that should be contained immediately. Fire policy does not adequately address the role of fire in forests, and it does not account for regional variance or the impact of climate change on fire frequency and intensity.

Fire is as elemental to forests as topsoil and rain. Forests develop in response to fire cycles, and they adapt to intensities and frequencies. The changing view of fire within forest policies reveals the instability in the way forests are socially constructed over time. Is a burned forest still a forest? Is it still beautiful, alive, and worth protecting for non-economic use? Fire policy, particularly in HRA, answers that a healthy post-fire landscape is one prepared to regrow profitable trees, and the dead and burned matter is

only valuable if recovered for profit before it goes to waste in the forest, presumably where it is taking up space and doing little else.

Fire policy has never been exclusively about addressing fires. Fire policy and the manipulation of public attitudes towards forest fires has been a battleground among competing discourses about what the forest is, if fire belongs in forests, how humans should regard forests, and how that is codified in public policy. Changes in fire policy reflect tensions in the state mandate to protect forests from industrial logging and to support industrial logging. The discourse of fires, like the discourse of forests, is unstable. Public attitudes have largely remained in fear of fires, which President G.W. Bush used to his advantage as he shaped fire policy to redefine the commodification of forests under the guise of forest health.

Critics of modern fire policy, like Stephen Pyne, argue that fire management decisions should not be left to the sole care of the federal land management agencies. Instead, fire management should be diffused among various stakeholders, from non-governmental organizations like The Nature Conservancy to residents of fire-affected communities (Pyne 2001). Others, like Timothy Inglesbee (2010), hope for a stronger ecological approach to fire management and firefighting, a return to prescribed fires that respect the role of fires in wildland evolution and health. These alternative perspectives acknowledge fire as a central actor, rather than envision fire as an enemy or nuisance.

Fires are agents of change, and create possibilities for imagining forests differently. They can also create an opening for land to be commodified, for the long reach of capitalism to turn protected land into raw material for the production of low-quality goods like pulp and particleboard for an international market. I argue that fires are

intimately connected to the movement to slow or stop deforestation, and they often create the conditions for natural resource conflicts. Politicizing fires is to recognize the potential for fires to unpredictably alter the future of a forest, for better or worse. It is imperative to give close scrutiny to the politics of forest fire, and to ask how to protected forests from the encroachment of capitalism made possible by these conflagrations. The next chapter focuses on a particular fire and the political battle that ensued. The Biscuit wildfire in 2002 turned protected land into commodified land, and called into question post-fire land management practices like salvage logging. This fire was, in many ways, a product of this long history of fire attitudes and policy.

## **Chapter 4: The Political Ecology of the Biscuit Fire**

This chapter is a detailed account of the ecological and political terrain of the Biscuit controversy. In abstraction, forests have been commodified by the public policy of forest health, the timber industry's stranglehold from the timber industry over land management, and the limited vocabulary and public participation methods available for discussing what constitutes a forest. Karl Polanyi (2001) made a sound argument that nature, like human life, is intrinsically valuable, and therefore should not be regarded and managed as a commodity. Karl Marx and modern green Marxists have likewise argued that the late modern capitalist system processes the environment as a raw material and energy source for the production of commodities and their subsequent transport, and considers nature as an empty space capable of holding commodities at the end of their life (Foster, Clark & York 2010).

Nature appropriated as a metabolic flow into commodity production and distribution is often disguised as green industrialism and green capitalism (Hawken, Lovins & Lovins 2008). These prescriptions promise profit and the benefits of environmentalism, and categorize critical and complex ecological processes as ecosystem services, often with an imagined price tag for how much those services might cost to artificially replicate, if such a thing were possible ("Ecosystem Services Economics"). As this overview of deforestation has shown so far, forests primarily managed as commodities, and secondarily as vital ecosystems produces a framework for addressing environmental conflict that favors economic interests.

These theories of the commodification of the environment are made intelligible when they are read through ecological conflict, and through the everyday practices of

managing the environment. Because the Biscuit fire is both a study of extenuating circumstances (a wildfire of historic proportions) and a study of normal practices of land management, it is an excellent site through which to explore how these theoretical explanations for chronic environmental disregard and degradation are present in our everyday lives, and how these misconceptions about nature remain embedded in policy and politics, despite the protests against degrading activities. Further, how people respond to environmental conflict offers insight into how political responsibility is assigned and practiced. The Biscuit case, in its ecological and political detail, makes a mess of relatively neat theoretical concepts, but demonstrates how these theories live in what would otherwise appear to be banal accounts of land management debates. The story of the Biscuit political conflict starts north of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, nearly a decade before the fire, when forest defense began to seriously wrestle with the both the ontology of the forest and the practice of activism.

### **Warner Creek and the Opening for Activism in the Rogue-Siskiyou**

The standoff over salvage logging Warner Creek set the stage for the Biscuit controversy, with which it shared similar political approaches, although not a similar outcome. Warner Creek was an essential moment in forest defense in the Pacific Northwest. President Clinton signed a salvage logging rider in 1995 that released thousands of acres of timber sales on public land that had been previously contested in lawsuits and appeals (Davis 1996). Warner Creek had never been cut, and the watershed area contained significant old growth as well as northern spotted owl habitat. In 1991 an arson fire torching 9,000 acres of forest exposed Warner Creek to salvage logging. Because Warner Creek was otherwise protected, many have speculated that the fire was

the work of an arsonist affiliated with the timber industry or with the Forest Service, which were both looking to open up the area to commercial logging (Davis 1996; *If a Tree Falls* 2011).

Anti-logging activists responded as they had to other salvage logging sales in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. They argued that Warner Creek should be left untouched to be an ecological experiment in natural regeneration (Davis 1996). In protest, radical activists established the Cascadia Free State: a fort with a drawbridge constructed from logs left behind by the Forest Service, teepees as makeshift homes, and supplies trekked in by volunteers. The protesters were committed to non-violent civil disobedience both in the forest and in Eugene, Oregon, where activists like Tim Ream sustained a 70-day hunger strike, and where protesters demonstrated and got arrested. In the woods, Warner Creek activists took video footage, blocked bulldozers, and maintained the longest road blockade in history (Abraham 2006b).

This site sparked tense relations between the Clinton administration – which wanted to buy back the sales at Warner Creek – and the Forest Service, which wanted to permit salvage logging (*Forest* magazine, date unknown). A year after Cascadia Free State was established, Forest Service security agents arrested protesters and destroyed the Earth First! Cascadia fort. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration, eager to maintain a positive conservation record in the Pacific Northwest in time for the upcoming election, negotiated a \$475,000 settlement with the Oregon timber company that bought the Warner Creek sales (*Forest* magazine, date unknown). Activists considered this a success, and the salvage logging rider was not renewed.

Out of this experience, the anti-logging movement radicalized in strategy and rhetoric. Protests that embraced their tactics became part of the “Warnerization” of activism (Abraham 2006b). Rather than address environmental injustice through engaging in peaceful marches, holding signs, and attending public hearings, protesters took action to prevent environmentally degrading practices from taking place, and demanded attention from the state, private industry, and the media (*If a Tree Falls* 2011). The run of the most notable Earth First! arsons in North America started shortly after Warner Creek was resolved. The FBI took special interest in Earth First!, ELF, and other radical environmental organizations and would later engage in a long-term campaign against the EF! arsonists known as Operation Backfire. Warner Creek became a new template for environmental activism, and marking a transition from protest and marches in towns and cities to blockades and direct action in the forests. The manifestation of these tactics was influenced by the particular ecological characteristics of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest.

### **Brief history of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest**

The Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest is tucked into the Klamath Mountains, which date back 200 million years. The mountain range has been characterized by Mediterranean plant species and northerly species since the Little Ice Age between 1350 and 1850. The soil varies, but much of the burn area contains ultramafic serpentine soil, which is in part responsible for the proliferation of endemic plant species in the area (FEIS 2004). Fire has been as much part of the landscape as the trees and owls. According to the Forest Service, a fire regime “refers to the role of fire in an ecosystem including frequency, seasonality, intensity, duration, scale (patch size), and periodicity or

variability” (FEIS 2004). Studies of the fire regime in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest found that it was mostly of frequent fire intervals of 10-50 years, of low to moderate severity with patches of high severity fires (FEIS 2004). The Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest was already prone to frequent and intense fires, with natural conditions exacerbated by poor forest management that left significant underbrush and woody biomass available to fuel more intense fire conditions.

### **Pre-settler Fire Management**

Although fire suppression has been both rejected and embraced in national fire debates, the region has a long history of humans manipulating fire cycles. Several Native American groups occupied the areas in and around the Biscuit fire, including the Coastal Athapascans, the Tututni, Tolowa, Chetco, and Galice bands (FEIS 2004). According to recent anthropological studies (Liews 1973; Barrett and Arno 1982; Pyne 1982; Agee 1990; Williams 1994; MacCleary 1994; Vale 2002; Stewart 2002) burning was a regular activity for specific ends, namely to create forest openings and to attract game; to harvest seeds and insects; and to encourage bulbs, roots, and berries frequently used for food and supplies (FEIS 2004). The FEIS noted that humans had been managing fire for a long time: “In order to maintain the highly productive oak woodlands during the xerothermic climatic maximum, a period of marked warming and drying of the environment from 4000 to 6,000 years ago, Indians employed fire extensively and regularly” (FEIS 2004, p.III-21).

Fires started and controlled by Native Americans were strategically developed to eliminate fuels that would create catastrophic fire, while still coaxing out both ecological and community benefits from their version of prescribed burning. The Final

Environmental Impact Statement for the post-fire forest management gave a brief overview of how pre-settlement Native Americans took up fire as a land management tool:

American Indians associated with the Recovery Area used a sophisticated, sometimes subtle, regime of prescribed fire to maintain a ‘desired condition’ for at least 4,000 years. Frequent low-intensity fire helped maintain an element of ecosystem stability that would not have existed without it. It reduced the number of less frequent, but high intensity stand replacing fires that would have occurred otherwise. It also promoted the growth of critical species that would have declined without a carefully calculated burning regime (p.III-23).

The early Native Americans certainly altered the forest to suit their needs, but they did so through careful, planned burning and changes that supported both human and non-human communities. Their land management is but one of several natural forces (because humans are not inherently “unnatural”) that created the conditions for the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest to become a global biodiversity hotspot and a beloved place for future generations.

### **Settlement and Fire Suppression**

When Native Americans were forced off their land and onto reservations, their controlled burning style was replaced with wholesale fire suppression. The Big Blowup of 1910 all but guaranteed suppression nation-wide. Between the early 1900s and 1940s “roughly the eastern two-thirds of the [Biscuit] Recovery Area has missed at least two fire cycles, and in some areas more than five fire cycles. This fire processes in the Recovery Area are not operating at the same levels as defined by the fire return intervals

over the last 250 years" (FEIS 2004, p.III-25). Although European settlers continued to use anthropogenic fires to change the landscape, their approach, coupled with national suppression policy, had the opposite effect of the Native American fire management scheme: "In contrast to native burning, this period saw an increase of mid elevation fires due to widespread prospecting and hunting in the 1850s-1890s...Incendiary fires continued well into the 1900s. By this time, a new cause for fires was the financial incentive of fire fighting for the Forest Service" (FEIS 2004, p.III-25).

The Forest Service took an increasing interest in managing federal forests for their economic value over all else, and in so doing adapted fire management to meet their new priority. This had significant consequences that would become the basis for forest conditions ripe for the Biscuit conflagration: "By the 1930s, fire suppression or fire exclusion began to be a dominant factor in changing the character of the vegetation in the area. Fire exclusion has contributed to a reduction in the size of grassy openings, to denser brush fields and forest, and to changes in the forest stands' species composition and age class" (FEIS 2004, p.III-25). Through the deliberate, political choices made by the Forest Service, forest composition took on characteristics that reflected the public fear of fire and the private sector's desire for high timber yields.

Even though a history of fire suppression throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century changed the fire regime of the area, the new pattern of high intensity fires did not necessarily mean the size and frequency of large fires was unusual or outside of what could be expected from that fire regime (FEIS 2004). Although the intensity was influenced by years of mismanagement, the fire still burned in a relatively predictable mosaic pattern, and should be considered natural, as the flora and fauna was already adapted to high intensity

fires, and in most cases can regenerate with little to no human interference. The fire in the Rogue-Siskiyou, historically mismanaged and geographically in a hotspot for forest fires, forced everyone with a stake in the forest to question how fires should be managed and if forests should be redesigned to minimize the risk of future fires of that scale.

### **Biscuit Background**

On July 13 of 2002, the Biscuit wildfire started as a series of lightning fires in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, a site of tremendous economic and ecological importance. The eco-region, designated by the World Conservation Union as a site of Global Botanical Significance, contains key watersheds and waterways for salmon runs, and encompasses more inventoried roadless areas than anywhere else in the Pacific Northwest. The Biscuit wildfire started as a group of unrelated burns that converged into a complex fire that burned almost 500,000 acres in just 120 days (Biscuit Chronology 2002). It was one of the hottest, most dangerous, and most destructive fires in the last century, and with a price tag of \$135,000,000 it became the most expensive fire to fight in Oregon. Over 7,000 firefighters were called to action, including support from New Zealand and Australia (Biscuit Chronology 2002). Flame plumes leapt hundreds of feet and spread the fire across great distances, threatening hand crews fighting the conflagration on the ground. Trees “pre-heated” by fire moving uphill exploded into burning pieces of wood that advanced the fire. These kinds of hazards required firefighting techniques safer for firefighters but more dangerous for the forest ecosystems.

The fires primarily burned in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area, a remote tract of land that contained a mix of new and old growth forests. The Biscuit started during the

peak of the fire season, when two of the six available helicopters with rappel crews were already committed to other fires, five of ten air tankers, six of twelve hotshot crews, and approximately half of the region's Type 2 crews were committed to other fires (Biscuit Fire Chronology 2002). The Kalmiopsis is far enough from the urban/wildland interface that it was not prioritized over other summer fires in California, Oregon, and Colorado that threatened human communities (mostly luxury and vacation homes). Although the fire eventually encroached on multiple communities in Oregon and California, the lack of firefighting resources made the response to the Biscuit fire slow and poorly coordinated.

The fire was enormous in scope:

The Biscuit fire burned through nearly all of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness and the headwaters of the Chetco and Smith Rivers. It swept across major tributaries to the Illinois River below Cave Junction, destroying four homes and nine outbuildings. Millions of trees were burned and habitat for various plant, wildlife and fish (including Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species) was altered or destroyed (FEIS 2004, p.ES-1).

The size and intensity of the fire created multiple concerns for the Forest Service, chief among these was how to recover economic value from burned trees. Road rehabilitation, water quality restoration, vegetation regeneration, wildlife habitats and fisheries, and fire hazards to human communities were all balanced against the desire to salvage log as quickly as possible. After the fire, the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest staff developed the Biscuit Fire Recovery Project and produced an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) required. Because the fire burned across different land designations and management plans, the Forest

Service produce a record of decision for each of the following categories of forest: Late-successional (old growth), matrix (commercial timber harvesting land), and within inventoried roadless areas.

In creating these impact plans, the Forest Service was able to include options for heavy logging. The final decision approved salvage logging and fuels reduction management, including removal of live and dead trees categorized as fuel hazards, which were to be cut and sold to timber companies. The fire created the opportunity to access these previously off-limits big trees, which the Forest Service made vulnerable, to the benefit of the timber industry. Salvage harvesting was permitted in the late successional and inventoried roadless areas, which became the administrative and physical location of the controversy.

Two sales in particular were the heart of anti-salvage logging controversy: Mike's Gulch and the Fiddler. Kathie Durbin, a veteran reporter on forestry issues in the Pacific Northwest, briefly explained the significance of these sales:

The Fiddler sale is the first to be logged in a reserve set aside as habitat for old-growth species under the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan. One of the next projects on the list is a 333-acre timber sale in Mike's Gulch, a roadless area previously protected by the Clinton administration's Roadless Area Conservation Rule. In May, President Bush released his own rule, which puts roadless areas off-limits to logging for 18 months. But the agency says the Biscuit project is exempt from the 18-month moratorium, so the Mike's Gulch project could go ahead (Durbin 2005).

Both of these sales took place in previously protected forest, and presented an affront to the NEPA EIS process, feedback from public participation, the Northwest Forest Plan under the Clinton administration, and the Endangered Species Act protecting the northern spotted owl. Salvage logging designated as a management practice would set a dangerous precedent leaving no public land safe from commodification.

Environmental organizations expressed their opposition through lawsuits, direct action, and public education, but many individuals participated through the sanctioned pathways for vocalizing their views on the use of public land. The decision to salvage harvest was determined, officially, by the Forest Service and published in the Final Environmental Impact Statement in 2004. The Forest Service created opportunities for public involvement, the mechanisms of which were limited, superficial, and managerial; the public was corralled and controlled. Democratic participation largely took place outside of these structures in both litigation and direct action in the forms of road blockades, tree-sits, and lawsuits.

### **Public Involvement in Decision-making**

This particular land management plan generated significant interest throughout the state. The public involvement process gave the impression of transparent decision-making, and suggested that the public had equal access to the agency as the timber industry. However, the modes of public participation gave little weight to public voices, and the letters and statements given during public hearings were not nearly as impactful as the industry-funded science taken up by the Forest Service to rationalize changes to the Environmental Impact Statement, among the other ways in which the industry exerted influence. Scholars like Frank Fischer (2000) have noted in other cases the relative

weakness of the public's access to environmental decision-making. The Forest Service initiated public involvement in their decision-making process. In December of 2002 and January of 2003, the Forest Service held 10 public outreach meetings in four southern Oregon communities that were affected by the fire. The meetings intended to gather information about what remediation efforts citizens supported (FEIS 2004). There were a number of stakeholders concerned with the outcome of the logging and recovery decisions. The Forest Service identifies the following key actors: Loggers and haulers, forestry workers, indirect support businesses (logging supply, fuel and equipment, etc.), industrial landowners (like Weyerhaeuser), private landowners, environmentalists, and recreationalists (FEIS 2004, III-407-408).

Missing from the list are modern Native American communities, among them groups who have historically occupied and shaped the forest and who have present-day interests and claims to the land. Native Americans reenter the story in the section of the Final Environmental Impact Statement entitled "Environmental Consequences" that detailed effects of the FEIS decision on ecological, economic, and cultural entities. After assessing the "social fabric," like the influx of temporary and racially diverse laborers and the consequences of road closure, the impact of the logging decision on Native Americans is finally considered. The two paragraphs that constitute the "Tribal Culture" section noted that: "Representatives of the Siletz and Grand Ronde Tribes have expressed an interest in restoring traditional cultural landscapes in the Biscuit Fire Area" (FEIS III-411). The FEIS describes the kinds of tree species important to the tribes and commits to replanting some of those species as the "intended beginning of a cultural landscape rotation" (FEIS 2004, III-411). This consideration is but a few pages from the

conclusion to this 400+ page study, which suggests Native American interests are not as prioritized over the lengthy considerations of economic and ecological studies of the post-burn forest. Native Americans, not only reduced to marginalia of consequences and side effects, were only considered through their preference of tree species. This accounts for an incredibly narrow slice of the relationship between tribes and the forest.

The environmentalist category is similarly slim. Here, environmentalists are defined as “people who are politically active in advocating conservation and preservation of the natural landscape. There is great diversity of opinion within the environmental community, including that related to the Biscuit Fire” (FEIS 2004, III-408). Despite recognizing that not all environmentalists share the same perspective about the forest and subsequent land management decisions, the Forest Service neglected to engage the multitude of responses to the Biscuit and logging controversy. Concern over salvage logging was addressed by mainstream environmental non-profits like the Sierra Club and Greenpeace; by regional non-profit organizations specifically dedicated to the Rogue-Siskiyou and Klamath National Forests; by radical groups affiliated with Earth First!, like Cascadia Forest Defenders; and by local community members, like those in Selma, Oregon, who worked with the Oxygen Collective, although ultimately unaffiliated with a particular group.

The diversity in perspectives and strategies from environmentalists had a significant influence on the outcome of the salvage logging decisions and the way the forest developed after the fire. Reducing this richness to an anemic summary of “politically engaged individuals” suggests the Forest Service did not take seriously the environmentalists or their impact and influence in the controversy. Conversely, the

timber industry and scientists funded by the timber industry at Oregon State University had a close, open relationship with the Forest Service, and thus were able to describe themselves and advocate for their needs in a less hostile and less simplistic context.

Public involvement began as the fire ended. On September 5, 2002 the Biscuit Fire was officially declared contained. Six months later on March 18, 2003, the Forest Service published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to solicit public comment on the proposed action to sell land for salvage logging. At the same time, the Forest Service sent a letter describing the proposed action to 500 individuals, groups, and tribes (FEIS 2004). The agency participated in county fairs, managed phone calls and letters from all over the world, provided regular updates to Congress, and even extended the public comment period after the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on November 24, 2003. Over 400 people participated in the five public hearings and meetings held by the Forest Service. The public comment period closed January 20, 2004, and the DEIS was made publicly available (FEIS 2004). The Forest Service received over 23,000 comments and over 450 emails and letters. The agency's breakdown of the letters shows most of these were a single form used by multiple people, while the remainder were from environmental organizations and individuals with discrete preferences. Of the 122 letters sent from Oregon, the majority came from Portland, while the rest were mostly from communities near the Biscuit Fire area (FEIS 2004).

The Forest Service observed that letters from Portland were generally against salvage logging and were concerned with biodiversity and ecological stability of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, while letters "closer geographically to the Biscuit Fire had multiple, and multi-dimensional concerns while those farther away tended to be

single issue oriented” (FEIS 2004, III-395). This finding suggests that environmentalists tended to view salvage logging more categorically than those with a different set of stakes in the outcome of land management decisions. While many from communities local to the Biscuit Fire area were dubious of salvage logging, they were also aware of the immediate impacts, from their economies to their infrastructures, of these decisions. The different concerns express a plurality of ontological orientations between people and the forest, as well as different economic, aesthetic, and political needs.

Letters from Selma and Cave Junction, towns at the epicenter of local logging enterprises and environmental activism, and towns deeply divided over the salvage logging issue, presented a challenge to the Forest Service: “The polarization of local communities about forest management remains high. Most letter writers did not simply state their concern for the analysis to assess, but were for or against a certain course of action. The topics around which polarization was highest were: whether salvage logging should occur or not, and whether active management was necessary or whether natural processes were adequate” (FEIS 2004, III-395). These differences in values were partially captured in the letters:

For example, a fair number of people stated that active management in the more remote areas of the Biscuit burn should not be extensive. For one set of people, those associated with traditional economic sectors and generally supportive of active management, the reason had to do with cost – it is just too expensive to do it all. For the other set of people, those associated with the counter culture, environmental organizations, or newer residents, the reason had to do with a value

for natural processes and the value for keeping human intervention to a minimum (FEIS 2004, III-395).

These ontological divides are evident in the everyday administrative practices of community land management. The Forest Service managed these differences simply by identifying them as part of a coding project. The manner in which the letters were counted and organized produced a crude rubric, seemingly to determine if opinions came from “inside” or “outside” the geography of the Biscuit fire.

Arguably, the status determined if public comment spoke to the real conditions of the forest or an abstraction of the same. In breaking down comments by geography and proximity to the burn area the Forest Service created additional divisions among those with a stake in the forest. Public involvement is a form of demography that was recorded, tallied, and organized by concern and desired outcome. The public was managed in such a way to neutralize the politically charged nature of the controversy. Technology like the internet and compact discs enabled the Forest Service to offer transparency and access to information without requiring them to do any serious work to engage cultural, political, epistemological, and ontological divides.

### **Managing Land, Managing People**

Public involvement, here, is better described as a method of governmentality rather than a vital democratic space. The Forest Service engaged a number of techniques for managing people who wished to change the management of the land. These technologies of public involvement were far from value neutral. The Forest Service has historical allegiance to the timber industry and a mission that explicitly promises to manage forests for economic value. The institutional framework of the Forest Service

shaped Public participation, and how individuals became one of several categories of participants (environmentalist, local community member, sawmill owner). The Forest Service created a structured system for public engagement that generated data and enabled the Forest Service to track demographics and sentiments that would later inform how much priority they would give to the various perspectives.

The arrangement of public involvement by the Forest Service can be understood as a set of practices that constitutes governance. The government arises out of the everyday practices of creating and applying laws, and the practices of creating identities inside and outside of civil society (illegal immigrants, sexual deviants, welfare queens, etc.) and the support or punishment they ought to expect from the state; it is in the language and practice of land management; it is in the spreadsheet tracking how many letters were sent to the Forest Service, from where and towards what purposes; it is in the FEIS so widely quoted throughout this work. The government is dependent on the complicity of people to accept its authority. It is dependent on populations to not just accept management from multiple administrations, but to manage itself by policing physical and social boundaries.

When democracy escaped administrative tracks and took place in the forest, the Forest Service and local law enforcement responded by only acknowledging litigation and conventional public participation, while criminalizing other forms of communication. The Forest Service and its thorough administration of the post-fire controversy made the government both a target for environmentalists and a vector through which all decisions, and all concerns, would pass. The way the Forest Service organized data about public

involvement fits the history of scientific management of the state, by creating statistics, and describing democracy in numbers.

Public participation regarding the Biscuit salvage logging was shaped, guided, and staged in ways that enabled the Forest Service to control the boundaries of the conversation, and the political officials, timber industry, and public safety (police departments) punished people who acted outside of the approved methods of democratic participation. This can be seen in the limited venues for participation, like letter-writing as one-sided communication (the Forest Service does not respond to individual letters); the restriction that public participation cannot take place after a decision has been rendered (HFRA 2003); and the violent response by the police to protesters who take up their own form of communication. Previous logging controversies, like Warner Creek in 1995, were an example of environmentalists growing exasperated with conventional public participation and instead taking up civil disobedience. In response, the Forest Service failed to engage with activists outside of their own terms and invoked violent repression, arrests, and destruction of their outposts blocking the logging road.

The outcome of Warner Creek standoff offers a chilling reminder that behind the seemingly innocuous mechanisms of public participation lies the potential for violence if these rules are not followed. While litigation was widely regarded as a nuisance to the timber industry and Forest Service, it was still considered a legitimate strategy and part of the range of choices available to participate in the decision making process. Treesits and road blockades, however, rejected the technologies and rationalities of public participation and created new ones, which were regarded as illegal and dangerous, and

were suppressed by police, political forces, and economic interests (*If a Tree Falls* 2011; Abraham 2006a).

Even among environmentalists, actions that bypassed the conventional outlets for participation were not always welcome. Not only do the practices of participation shape the discourse and hem in the boundaries of what is possible to change, but it shapes the individuals who constitute the public in this instance. Thousands of citizens wrote letters to the Forest Service, some attended planning meetings, and others filed lawsuits through their respective organizations. Far fewer stepped outside of the standard practices for participation, and they acknowledged that working within the system was a key strategy to saving forests from logging.

How environmentalists, loggers, and the government performed these administrative acts determined how they would interact together and what kinds of actions were possible and impossible. In the Biscuit, individual identities played a significant role in what people would and wouldn't do in defense of their position on salvage logging. Interventions like public hearings and ultimately auctions to sell rights to log suited many loggers, mill owners, and others who were economically tied to the timber industry. Interventions like state violence against treesitters and protesters maintained direct action as a rogue, illegal activity, rather than a legitimate and useful political strategy. Governance was not exclusively the job of the various actions of the government. Governance was informed by the timber industry and activists.

Participation through the Forest Service was limited by its own philosophy of "sustainable yield," which I have argued is too subjective and too vulnerable to industry interests to act as a real safeguard against over-logging. The Forest Service was designed

as a mediator between the demands the ecology and the demands of economy, with funding, support, and sometimes staff provided by the timber industry. To fight the production of forests as commodities, environmentalists had to also act from a different set of positions, a new set of language, and without the limitations of the public involvement process set out by the Forest Service itself. This thinking also challenged the “natural” placement of nature within the economy, and by extension how natural the economy might be (Smith 2008).

The Forest Service held a contradictory ontology of the forest as both essentially outside and inside of the global economy and national infrastructure, and this was reflected in the agency’s sympathy towards private interests and access to public land. Its preference for producing forests as commodities was visible through the administrative practices it undertook. Miller and Rose have identified the way these relations of power direct political energies: “Political power is exercised today through a profusion of shifting alliances between diverse authorities in projects to govern a multitude of facets of economic activity, social life and individual conduct. Power is not so much a matter of imposing constraints upon citizens as of ‘making up’ citizens capable of bearing of a kind of regulated freedom” (Miller & Rose 2008, p.53). Public participation was not imposed as much as it was offered. The Forest Service might imagine that citizens weren’t limited, they were given democratic space, and in return the agency would consider their perspectives. If citizens did not wish to bear the freedom of democracy, their unconventional approaches would largely be disregarded.

Although the Forest Service was not the seat of power in this controversy, it intensified the economic view of forestry through its political alliances, its selective use

of scientific research, and in its agency mission that enabled it to limit the range of land management options and preclude the choice of conservation and natural regeneration without salvage logging. In response, a number of environmental organizations fought salvage logging through conventional and unconventional means, both empowering the Forest Service and presenting a real challenge to the Forest Service's authority. The timber industry and the Bush administration expressed frustration with lawsuits – activities outside of the Forest Service framework for participation – and claimed they delayed a final decision, and caused downed trees to lose value as they decayed on the forest floor (GAO 2006, p.4).

Frank Fischer aptly stated how public agencies feel about participation circumnavigating their limitations: “Reflecting a subtle antipathy toward democratic processes, terms such as ‘pressures’ and ‘expedient adjustments’ are used to denigrate pluralistic policymaking. If politics does not fit into the methodological scheme, then politics is the problem” (Fischer 2000, p.5). Instead of recognizing these interventions are meaningful attempts at public participation, these acts were criticized for their economic impact on potential profit from salvage logging. This suggests that participation is designed to minimize the role of the citizen, and to shape democratic activity to fit the economic needs of the Forest Service and the timber industry, both of which stood to profit from salvage logging. As citizens came together to fight the timber industry and the Forest Service, they took up political strategies that raise the profile of their perspectives and interfered with the ability of the Forest Service and timber companies to carry out their goals.

### **Post-fire Politics**

## **The Environmental Organizations**

The Forest Service decision to open up land for salvage logging sparked activity from the timber industry and environmental organizations. The lengthy process of both public participation and the scientific debate meant that salvageable timber lost economic value as it decayed on the forest floor. The urgency to harvest for the timber industry was met by the urgency to stop the sales and subsequent logging from environmental organizations. The effort to stop logging mobilized a range of environmental responses, and the variety of strategies offers a glimpse of the conflicts and compromises from within the environmental movement. These organizations applied numerous tactics to stop or encourage logging: Direct action, litigation, negotiation with the Forest Service, collusion with forest scientists at Oregon State University, and public campaigning for their respective positions. These approaches challenged and encouraged liberal responsibility. However, all of the chosen political tactics struggled to mount a set of political strategies powerful enough to radically change public land management. As the status quo favored the timber industry, their work was far less demanding, although they nevertheless endeavored to create science-based validation for their economic needs and to reinforce a commodity view of the forest.

Many organizations and individuals participated in the salvage logging controversy, but this research will focus on those that had a special impact, like the forestry scientists who were the subject of tremendous scrutiny, and the organizations that filed lawsuits and participated in direct action. After a brief introduction to each organization and their primary political strategies, I will consider how these political and ethical reactions to salvage logging shaped the discourse of the controversy, how they

resisted and reinforced certain notions of environmental responsibility, and how they fit into a broader array of technologies and rationalities of governance, thus failing to offer a revolutionary challenge to the management of land and of democratic participation.

Activists worked within the ideologies that grounded their organizations, but some acted contrary to the ideologies held by their organization, while others challenged the conditions of possibility by supporting other ideologies and other strategies. The cooperation between mainstream environmental organizations and radical environmental organizations is an example of actors moving between ideological boundaries without radically altering their core beliefs. The variations in language, like describing logging as a fuels management instead of deforestation, produced different accounts of the forest and its value to humans. These ideological perspectives likewise shaped the politics of these actors, what they could or could not do, and which political actions would be in-line with their ideologies. These ideologies were made through their choice of political strategy; an ecocentric ideology might be less compromising and less inclined to negotiate with the state than an ideology of ecological modernization. Exploring the most active groups in the controversy reveals the complex relationships between ideology and politics.

### ***Earth First!***

Earth First! is a radical environmental movement, or rather an idea and set of generally agreed upon strategies that anyone can take up in defense of the planet. The movement is primarily concerned with environmental degradation and the impacts on the non-human species and elements of ecosystems. While the politics of Earth First!ers often support anti-oppression work from racism to sexism, they are not explicitly

connected to social problems. The organization is not exactly an organization, but rather a community of people, often anonymous to each other, who share a set of beliefs and practice the same kinds of strategies for actualizing them. Earth First! is hostile to mainstream environmentalism and those organizations' willingness to compromise with the state and industry. This is made clear in the organization's tagline, "No compromise in defense of Mother Earth!" ("Earth First!"). For Earth First!, engaging in litigation, policy negotiation, and other forms of concession making is not an acceptable strategy. Instead, direct action, monkeywrenching, community organizing, property damage, public campaigns, and drawing attention to counter-culture lifestyles like bioregionalism, veganism, and communal living fit with Earth First! principles.

Earth First! is widely considered a radical environmental group, especially since they are loosely organized "cells" or affiliated, voluntary groups of people with similar political and ethical positions (Wall 1999). This structure is similar to the way terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda are characterized in mainstream media, which contributes to the public perception that Earth First! is a terrorist organization (Potter 2013). There is no formal leadership, although there is regular publication of an Earth First! journal and many Earth First! The FBI closely watches activists; some members have been prosecuted on a range of charges from property destruction to disorderly conduct (Potter 2013; "Earth First!").

Groups like the Foundation for Biomedical Research keep track of "eco-terrorism" crimes, and legislation like the Animal Enterprise Protection Act of 1992 classify certain forms of environmental action as eco-terrorism, from economic damage due to peaceful protesting to distributing undercover videos of animal abuse at factory

farms, to throwing pies at CEOs of environmentally damaging industries (Potter 2013). The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a group of legislators, businesses, and foundations that propose model bills to Congress, composed the Animal and Ecological Terrorism Act in 2003. The model bill recommended a wide range of direct action tactics to be considered terrorism and prosecuted as such (Potter 2011). These acts would not just ensnare radical activists from Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front (the primary targets of this legislation) but it would also capture fairly mainstream organizations like the Sierra Club, which recently lifted its ban on civil disobedience in response to the increasingly dire state of global climate change (“Stand with the Planet” 2013). Although the group has been labeled a terrorist organization, Earth First! countered this with the claim that radicalism is in the eye of the beholder:

Earth First! has survived attacks by moderates, would-be leaders and the agents of the system, remaining the most diverse, passionate, committed, and uncompromising group of environmental activists. Our direct actions in defense of the last wild places only seem radical compared to an entire paradigm of denial and control, where the individual is convinced they are powerless, and the organizations set up to protect the wilderness continue to bargain it away (“Earth First!”).

As many other environmentalists have pointed out, the destruction of ecosystems, communities, and power of accelerated capitalism is radical, not the actions taken to stop or slow the commodification and consumption of the planet. This difference in perspective about what constitutes radical is often a point of disagreement within the environmental movement, and outside the movement, too.

Relations between Earth First!, the Oxygen Collective, and the Cascadia Forest Defenders were cooperative, and tense. Likewise, relations between radical groups and moderate were at once supportive and abrasive. The Cascadia Forest Defense, the Wild Siskiyou Action USA, and the Oxygen Collective represented local direct action and radical efforts to stop salvage logging. These groups attracted long-time environmentalists, urban activists, and college students primarily from the University of Oregon, a school situated in a hotbed of environmental activism found in Eugene, Oregon. These three groups may have been outside of the mainstream environmental movement, but they generally worked collaboratively with the organizations that filed lawsuits, regardless of the stated principles of the Earth First! and similar radical organizations. Each of these groups has different stories.

### ***Wild Siskiyou Action USA***

The Earth First! local affiliate, this group was primarily composed of experienced direct action activists who lived in Southern Oregon and felt a deep personal connection to the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. One former member describes their relationship to the forest as akin to what a religious person might feel when they walk into a cathedral (Interview data, subject 1, 2012). While the Wild Siskiyou Action was a local project, the group sometimes hosted activists from Portland and other cities around the country, who came down to the forest to participate in direct action and leave again. Wild Siskiyou Action was grateful to have bodies in front of bulldozers and people willing to get arrested, but the regionally-based activists formed the organizational core (interview data, subject 1, 2012). The group, mostly held together by 4-6 people at a given time, considered themselves “the muscle” of the effort to stop salvage logging. The members

did not all agree on why salvage logging was wrong, but they did all agree that it shouldn't happen in the Biscuit, and that was good enough.

Their local credentials enabled them to do community outreach because they weren't outsiders imposing abstract notions of environmentalism on timber dependent towns. This rang true when Wild Siskiyou Action recruited locals for a women's blockade of the green bridge. As a former member recalls, women from the local towns were more willing to listen to and team up with activists who were also their neighbors, while they were reluctant to trust "a random punk kid from Portland" (Interview data, subject 1, 2012). Even though Wild Siskiyou Action was an Earth First! affiliate, which meant it was part of a group that opposed compromise with the state and moderate environmentalists, the group frequently collaborated with the other organizations protesting logging. In fact, Wild Siskiyou Action provided a service to the regional non-profit organizations that would not participate in direct action, but recognized the importance of stalling logging to enable others to pursue litigation.

Although it was well received by many other organizations, Wild Siskiyou Action was still unable to receive financial support from them since their activities were considered illegal. The group subsisted off of modest donations from individuals, volunteered food and shelter, and their own ingenuity, from dumpster diving to working odd jobs, to support their work. Greenpeace provided some financial and logistical support, like donating walkie talkies. The group focused on their enemies in common with other environmental organizations – The Forest Service, the Josephine County Sheriff's Department, and the timber companies – in mutual support (Interview data, subject 1, 2012).

### ***Cascadia Forest Defense***

In full disclosure, during the height of protest over salvage logging, I was part of the University of Oregon student activist organization, the Survival Center. While I was not directly involved in CFD or the salvage logging protests I was privy to informal discussions and general activist community chatter about CFD and the protests. Some of my information about the CFD comes from my own experience around the movement, rather than from published texts describing the movement.

Cascadia Forest Defense, or CFD, is a grassroots organization that operates similarly to Earth First!, although a separate Earth First! Cascadia organization also exists. Activists in this group frequently referred to themselves as the Cascadia Forest Defenders. CFD takes explicit aim at the timber industry in the Pacific Northwest, and their preferred tactics are largely non-violent direct action. The CFD were instrumental in organizing and conducting road blockades and tree-sits to protest the salvage logging sales. They participated in a major road blockade at the “green bridge” that prevented access to the logging roads that lead to the Mike’s Gulch and Fiddler sales.

CFD endeavored to address multiple injustices at once, and held workshops on several topics including a trans and gender queer camp. The CFD was loosely organized, favoring a horizontal organizational structure, consensus-style decision-making, and concern for the internal dynamics of the group as well as the political strategies to stop salvage logging. CFD actions were successful insofar as they temporarily stopped logging from taking place, but they, along with all other organizations that responded to the salvage logging decision, ultimately lost to the Forest Service and timber industry.

Although CFD was eager for supporters, the political climate in Eugene, and nationally, required the group to conduct meetings and to organize in relative secrecy. In the post-9/11 political landscape, corporations and many legislators closed ranks and redefined legal political protest and non-violent civil disobedience as acts of terrorism (Potter 2011). As ALEC pressured Congress to rewrite the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act to cast a wider net for environmental activists, and as the FBI increased surveillance of individuals and groups thought to be radical activists, the CFD responded by operating with caution.

What follows are observations about the organization from the best of my recollection while working at the Survival Center. Meeting locations were only revealed to trusted group members; individuals were known by their activist nicknames rather than their legal names; information about actions and action planning were only entrusted to those who were allowed to join meetings; and an atmosphere of suspicion and fear always threatened to create fractures within the group itself. The group, largely young college students and other activists in their early to mid-twenties, struggled with maintaining the safety of women, trans, and gender queer people during actions in the woods. Many women, transpeople, and gender queer folks informally reported sexual assault, rape, and other violent attacks made by straight white men within CFD. The internal politics and violence had a strong influence on the sister issues that CFD and Earth First! addressed in addition to forest defense.

### ***The Oxygen Collective***

The Oxygen Collective, like the other local, radical organizations, was a loose affiliation started by a group of friends who previously focused on anti-war and social

justice issues. The group felt deeply connected to the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. While many members had scientific backgrounds, they also felt a “visceral” and “familial” connection (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). As one activist described, salvage logging felt like a “very real, urgent personal attack” on family. “We felt like we were raised by these places, they weren’t just pretty to visit or something that we liked, but the Earth itself had an intrinsic right to exist and be left wild and be healthy, like humans” (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). Some of the founding group members were introduced to local wildfires and Bush administration forest politics through personal experience.

One person interviewed shared with me a story about their encounter with the President. A group of friends living in the Little Applegate Valley fought the Squires Fire as it threatened their small farm. Shortly after the fire was extinguished, an employee of the BLM called the farm and tipped them off that President Bush himself would be using the edge of their farm to announce the Healthy Forests Restoration Initiative. A former activist recalls the President arrived with several police motorcades, armored cars, and armored helicopters. The group experienced an altercation with the police, and later participated in a road blockade where President Bush made his announcement of the Healthy Forests Restoration Initiative. An insulting “free speech zone” was established at the fairgrounds: A barbed wire cage roughly a quarter of a mile away from the site of the Bush Administration personnel (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). This experience, along with the group members’ ongoing interest in social and environmental justice issues, galvanized them to act against salvage logging in the Biscuit burn area.

The group worked closely with other regional non-profits, and some members of the O2 Collective were board members on the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center,

which provided material support, but not financial. The Collective was primarily funded by the members themselves. Like the Wild Siskiyou Action group, the Collective recognized that direct action, especially actions populated by urban, “outsider” activists, was unsettling to locals who lived near the site of the fire and logging projects. The O2 Collective started the Biscuit Alliance in Selma, Oregon, a joint task force between the community and The Collective that allowed both groups to discuss the logging projects, and ultimately to convince the community members that logging was not in their best interest. The Biscuit Alliance established trust between local activists and the local community. The Collective, as well as other action-oriented organizations, successfully recruited community members to participate in direct action tactics. The O2 Collective identified as radical, much like the CFD and Wild Siskiyou Action, except they envisioned a different way to engage the community to participate in the anti-logging campaign. In addition to direct action like road blockades, the O2 Collective utilized political theater to share their message and to encourage participation.

The group acquired a 40 foot long, 1972 Greyhound bus, cheekily named “Priscilla” after the film “Priscilla, Queen of the Desert.” The bus was fully outfitted with a kitchen and sleeping quarters, and a large space for banners along the side of the bus, which ran on biodiesel (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). The group embarked on a West Coast tour in 2004, which included activists, naturalists, scientists, and musicians to tell the story of why the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest was a special and important place, what salvage logging would do to it, and how people could mobilize to stop the logging. As one activist recalls, the tour had a carnivalesque character, but maintained a serious and science-based argument to stop salvage logging (Interview data, subject 5, 2012).

The group found success recruiting people from community centers, college campuses, and activist organizations, many of whom traveled to the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest to join in forest defense. Ultimately, The Collective wanted to demonstrate that the fight over the Biscuit was bigger than this specific incident; there was a pattern of deforestation to feed capitalism's demand for raw resources.

Like the other direct action organizations, the group experienced tension between strategies to address the systemic nature of deforestation and strategies to address the immediate forest destruction in their own backyards. While The Collective, CFD, and Siskiyou Wild Action agree that direct action tactics were successful at slowing logging and costing timber companies and the Forest Service money, these tactics were unable to deal with the legislative and political processes and relationships that enabled deforestation on large scales over long periods of time. Less radical organizations fought the same battle to save the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, but from a different set of perspectives and strategies.

### ***Cascadia Wildlands Project***

The Cascadia Wildlands Project organized around the Warner Creek anti-salvage logging campaign in 1995 (Interview data, subject 3, 2012). Some group members of the Cascadia Wildlands Project had been active in the Warner Creek protests. This group took special interest in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, and was heavily active in the anti-salvage logging movement in the Biscuit fire area. As one employee recalls, The Project felt compelled to act because Mark Rey, the US Agriculture Undersecretary under the Bush administration, was firmly committed to increasing logging in the Pacific Northwest. Leaving logging decisions to his discretion was a case of “the fox guarding

the henhouse” since he was solely interested in “payback time for his buddies in the timber industry” (Interview data, subject 3, 2012). The Project recognized that the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, and the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area in particular, were forged out of fire and were therefore able to recover in a fire-affected landscape. Clearcut logging in the aftermath of a fire was based on “old science” instead of contemporary research. The Project was moved by a sense of moral responsibility to the forest, especially old growth. Anti-logging campaigns from the 1990s brought attention to the historical, ecological, and social importance of old growth trees and forests.

The Cascadia Wildlands Project took over from this work and used multiple strategies for forest protection: They hosted guided hikes and educational events to introduce the public to the forest and to “capture their imaginations” about the importance of old growth and why they should take action to protect it (Interview data, subject 3, 2012). The Project identified breaches in bedrock environmental law, like NEPA, upon which to base serious lawsuits; and The Project collaborated with other regional organizations to share knowledge and tactics and sometimes material support to direct action activists. The Cascadia Wildlands Project argued that the Forest Service violated the Northwest Forest Plan, the regional forest plan, and NEPA in their environmental impact statement. Like all lawsuits filed against the Forest Service, the Cascadia Wildlands Project lost their suit, but they raised awareness of old growth protection in the region, and continue to act as a watchdog organization for wildland in the area.

While the organization was pleased with its efforts to stop salvage logging, there was something rote about the public education and litigation. As the organization

member described the process, it was as though there was already an orchestrated dance between the timber industry, the Circuit Court, the Forest Service, and the organization that filed the suit. Even though judges frequently granted injunctions to stop logging until the court ruled on a lawsuit, each player could anticipate the strategy of the other, and while there was frustration among them, there was almost a tacit agreement to play out natural resource conflicts this way.

### ***The American Forest Resource Council***

The only group from within the timber industry to file a lawsuit against the Forest Service, the AFRC made several appearances throughout the controversy. The group acted as an industry representative in media coverage of the logging fights, and they counseled Oregon State University's Dean of the College of Forestry (CoF), Hal Salwasser, through the media firestorm surrounding the CoF's competing scientific articles on the impact of salvage logging the Biscuit. Members of the AFRC are from manufacturers and companies affiliated with the timber industry, including poles, piling, plywood, logs, chips, forestland owners, law firms, consultancy, and insurance agencies that work with the industry. This coalition spans California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. In a memo published on their website, the AFRC president identified sustainability as an important forestry goal, but also criticized the federal government for heavy-handed forest management:

Beginning with a few threatened species like the spotted owl and several salmon runs, moving to stream management and land use, the federal government exercises powers previously delegated to state and local governments. This

unprecedented move requires the forest industry to maintain a response team to keep up with changes confronting our industry (AFRC newsletter, 2013).

The AFRC subscribes to the commodity forestry form of sustainability, where economic profit is a measure of successful forestry, and maintaining tree plantations in lieu of healthy forests is an acceptable position. The group's distrust of the federal government's approach to forest protection is evidenced in their list of achievements for 2011, which includes successful lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C.; encouraging the Obama administration to consider increasing timber harvest for forest health, and for supporting rural economies; and participating in a task-force that successfully received a one-year moratorium requiring forest roads to obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits under the Clean Water Act.

Their activities suggest a stance against environmental protection legislation in national forests, a desire for land management to take place closer to the influence of regional industry, and act as a call for logging to be considered a sustainable, healthy practice. The AFRC acts as a clearinghouse of industry-friendly research, updates on legislation and lawsuits, and relevant political activities for the Pacific Northwest timber industry.

In 2004 the AFRC sued the Forest Service for the “legal and moral” right to salvage log the Biscuit burn (Partin 2004). Tim Partin, then-president of the AFRC, wrote in *Evergreen* magazine that the Forest Service’s refusal to salvage log was damaging to forest ecology and recovery (Partin 2004). The AFRC claimed that their primary concern was forest regeneration, and that salvage logging would allow green trees to grow where black trees currently stood. The added benefit to salvage logging would be economic

growth for local sawmill owners. He cited “clear science” that proved Douglas fir, the dominant tree species in the forest, would not be able to re-grow in current conditions. Partin described the AFRC strategy to advocate for forest health as a “sue and accomplish” strategy, which he contrasted to the “sue & obstruct” approach used by “radical environmentalists” in their mistaken view of forest health (Partin 2004). The AFRC slid between a stated interest in forest health and a primary interest in forests as a commodity. The language of commodity forestry enabled organizations, especially those in the timber industry, to invoke science and profit using the same body of scientific research.

The AFRC did not resign itself to “sue and accomplish” as its only strategy for opening up the forest to salvage logging. Chris West, then-Vice President of the AFRC, acted as a personal media guide to and liaison between Hal Salwasser and the timber industry. The industry tried to craft a media image of deep care for the forest and an interest in sustainable land management. The industry, eager for political and public support, did not call attention to its historic and current campaigns to open up protected land to logging, or the funding it funneled to scientific research to prove the need for logging as restoration. Instead, the industry also participated in the dependence on forestry and ecological science to ground its economic, political, and philosophical perception of the forest. Durbin (2005) reported:

Even the timber industry kept its distance from the salvage logging plans, says Ross Mickey of the American Forest Resource Council. ‘The Biscuit was still burning when we met with the Forest Service and told them we didn’t want any salvage, we wanted them to focus on rehabilitation,’ he says. Mickey admits

that's a little disingenuous. The industry knew the Forest Service needed revenue from salvage logging to pay for reforestation. But he insists the industry's real goal was to get every possible acre replanted. 'We want a forest there,' he says. 'Without active tending of plantations, there isn't going to be a forest there.'

Although the AFRC claimed an interest in forests, their interchangeable use of "forests" and "plantations" betrayed their relationship to the trees. Plantations are not forests; they are ecologically barren and are designed to maximize profit, not to restore what was destroyed by deforestation. Replanting emphasizes economically, not ecologically, profitable species.

In moments such as these, "what is a forest?" becomes a political question. If one compared the descriptions of a forest among the timber industry, the Oregon State University College of Forestry, and each activist organization (and each activist), a forest would take on such radically different characteristics it would be difficult to render it as an illustration, let alone manage it as a commons. How one considers their responsibility to forest protection is strongly influenced by what one considers a forest to be. An Earth First!er would reject a plantation as a forest, just as a timber company would reject the forest as primarily for spiritual and aesthetic appreciation. A working forest is similarly fraught with the ontological divides that shapes forest conflicts like salvage logging the Biscuit.

The FEIS decision to allow salvage logging sales was cause for mobilization for the timber industry as well as environmental non-profit organizations. The conflict that ensued during and after the Forest Service published the FEIS demonstrates how land management reaches beyond distributing goods, but irritates long-standing disagreements

about the object of management, and what kinds of politics follows from these ontological positions.

### **Post-decision Politics**

After these decisions were made, several environmental organizations responded to the Forest Service's FEIS. Seven groups filed lawsuits against the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The groups were the American Forests Resources Council (AFRC), the Siskiyou Regional Education Center, the Wilderness Society, the Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics (FSEEE), the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, the Cascadia Wildlands Project, and the states of Oregon, Wyoming, Washington, California, and New Mexico. Each of these organizations offers an example of a different facet of the environmental movement. The table below illustrates the reasons for and outcomes of each lawsuit. This data was retrieved from the Biscuit Fire Salvage Sales Timeline from the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest Website ("Biscuit fire salvage sales timeline").

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Date filed lawsuit</b>	<b>Reason for lawsuit</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
American Forest Resources Council	July 9, 2004	Against Forest Service alleging the Biscuit Fire Recovery Project provides for inadequate reforestation	Lawsuit dismissed in District Court with Forest Service prevailing; No appeal
Siskiyou Regional Education Project & The Wilderness Society	July 12, 2004	Against Forest Service alleging various inadequacies within Biscuit Fire Recovery Project, including Emergency Situation Determination and Environmental Impact Statement, noncompliance with the Northwest Forest Plan among others	Lawsuit dismissed in District Court with Forest Service prevailing; 9th Circuit Appeal filed

Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics	July 14, 2004	Against Forest Service alleging improper designation of trees for harvesting, noncompliance with the Northwest Forest Plan, and inadequate disclosure within the Environmental Impact Study	Lawsuit dismissed in District Court with Forest Service prevailing; 9th Circuit Appeal filed
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center	Sept. 21, 2004	Against Bureau of Land Management in the Silver Hawk Salvage timber sale, alleging violation of Federal Land Policy and Management Act and Northwest Forest Plan	Lawsuit dismissed in District Court, dissolving injunction against Silver Hawk Salvage timber sale; No Appeal filed
Cascadia Wildlands Project	Dec. 23, 2004	Against Forest Service alleging noncompliance with the Siskiyou Forest Plan and Northwest Forest Plan, inadequacies with Environmental Impact Statement	Lawsuit dismissed in District Court with Forest Service prevailing; 9th Circuit Appeal filed
California, New Mexico, Oregon, Wyoming, Washington	Aug. 30, 2005	Against Forest Service alleging State Petitions for Inventoried Roadless Area Management Rule constituted a revision of agency rules within the National Environmental Policy Act and lacks rationality under the Administrative Procedures Act	Defendants required to abide by NEPA guidelines for inventories roadless. All other lawsuits dismissed.
Cascadia Wildlands Project	June 1, 2006	Against Forest Service alleging failure to prepare supplemental impact statement based on new information	Lawsuit dismissed in District Court with Forest Service prevailing; 9th Circuit Appeal filed

**Table 4. Lawsuits Filed in Regard to the Biscuit Post-Fire Land Management Decisions.** This table shows each lawsuit brought against the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management by various environmental organizations, states, and timber industry representative groups. For complete information about each case, see Appendix D (Biscuit Fire Salvage Sales Timeline, n.d., used under fair use, 2013).

Six of the seven groups filed lawsuits accusing the Forest Service and BLM of breaching the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP), the forest management policy President Clinton initiated to resolve the spotted owl crisis and to protect significant ecosystem services like watershed stability, salmon runs, and habitat for regional endangered

species. Some lawsuits identified breaches of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest management plan, which protected late successional and inventoried roadless areas for endangered species habitat. Some challenged the EIS process and the economic analysis of the sale while others challenged the designation of trees available for harvest and the invocation of emergency conditions in order to bypass administrative and public appeals. Most of the lawsuits accused the Forest Service of allowing unauthorized personnel to mark trees for salvage logging and for performing an incomplete NEPA analysis. The AFRC challenged the post-fire management plan for proposing an inadequate reforestation commitment. According to the AFRC, the slow process meant harvestable trees decayed in the forest and lost economic value as they remained on the ground. The Forest Service prevailed in each case. The plaintiffs of the six Forest Service lawsuits requested a total of five Temporary Restraining Orders, seven Preliminary Injunctions, and five Stays from District and 9th Circuit Courts. All requests were denied (Biscuit fire salvage sales timeline 2002).

Logging commenced within a couple of years of the fire. Between July of 2004 and June of 2005, twelve Forest Service fire salvage timber sale contracts were awarded, none of which were in Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). The following year on June 9, 2006, Mike's Gulch timber sale contract was auctioned, and on June 27<sup>th</sup> the sale was awarded to the only bidder, the Silver Creek Timber Company. The contract covered over 9 million board feet of timber on 261 acres in an IRA (AP Press 2006). Silver Creek also won the bid for the Fiddler and Blackberry salvage logging sales in the Biscuit. The timber company paid \$300,052 for the 9 million board feet of timber available to harvest (AP Press 2006). Representatives from Silver Creek complained that the long wait

through litigation and protesting the sales cost the company thousands of dollars in timber too far decayed to be of economic value. The environmental nonprofit organizations and several Oregon political representatives, including Governor Ted Kulongoski, argued that the sale violated promised protection of the IRAs until the Oregon state petition to halt logging had been considered by courts (AP Press 2006). The Fiddler and Mike's Gulch sales became the focal point of logging and environmental protection interests, and the epicenter of the controversy over how to value and how to manage the post-fire landscape.

The controversy over these two sales hinged on whether or not the forest was still pure enough to be considered more valuable ecologically than economically. The Forest Service took the position that an old-growth forest, once burned, is no longer an old-growth forest. As one former Forest Service employee shared: "We're not in the wilderness, we're not clear-cutting and we're not cutting old growth," Lavagnino said" (Durbin 2005). From this perspective, forests that aren't wilderness protected are freely available for industrial logging, as they have lost their value as pristine wildland. This "all or nothing" perspective is what the environmental historical William Cronon warned against in his essay "The Trouble with Wilderness" (Cronon 1995). Salvage logging is justified on the grounds that this forest already marked by previous logging and fire scars, is not worth protecting.

The decision to salvage log also rested on forestry research that claimed salvage logging was a responsible activity to prevent future conflagrations. Competing scientific reports about the relative fragility and resiliency of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest fueled the debate about whether or not to salvage log. Ecological forestry science and

commodity forestry science collided within the College of Forestry. The College was a known friend of the timber industry, and the controversy fractured the faculty and threatened the credibility of the College itself. The debates affirmed the primacy of science as the epistemology of authority to determine the definition and uses of the forest.

As the tight relationship between the timber industry and emergent scientific research on salvage logging became increasingly visible, Oregon state Senator Charlie Ringo made a Freedom of Information Act request to access Hal Salwasser's email account (Abraham 2006c). The emails contained a high volume of communication between Salwasser and Chris West of the AFRC; Max Merlich, the Vice President of Forest Operations for Columbia Helicopter, the outfit that would win the bid to heli-log the salvage sites; John Sessions and the joint authors of the Sessions report; Jock Mills, the Director of Government Relations at OSU; and others from regional sawmills and timber companies concerned about the Donato report (Donato, et.al. 2006) and if funding for the College of Forestry was directed at research that would decrease logging opportunities (FOIA documents). These documents illustrate the uproar surrounding the science debates between new and conventional forestry perspectives.

### **The Science Debates**

#### **The Sessions Report vs. the Donato Report**

In 2003 the Sessions report, funded by timber-dependent Douglas County and issued by a team of researchers at Oregon State University led by Dr. John Sessions, published a plan that estimated there were billions of board feet available for harvest in inventoried roadless areas that was not accounted for in the EIS (Sessions, et.al. 2004). The introduction of new scientific research required the Forest Service to investigate

these claims and subsequently produced new action alternatives for the EIS. This resulted in a significant delay for the Forest Service to make a final decision regarding how and where to salvage log (GAO 2006). However, this delay was not considered an impediment to the EIS process by the Bush administration, although they publically accused environmentalists of exploiting public participation and for delaying forest management. In fact, in their study “The Biscuit Fire Recovery Project,” the GAO found that the lawsuits filed against the sales did not delay implementation of the salvage sales in matrix areas (GAO 2006). The Sessions report had an immediate impact on the decision-making process, and made clear the allied relationship between the Forest Service, The CoF, and the timber industry. Kathie Durbin observed the political use of the Sessions Report:

The Sessions report hit the streets on July 17, as Rich Fairbanks and his team were rushing to get the draft environmental impact statement to the printer. Within days, Scott Conroy, supervisor of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, was summoned to Washington, D.C. The Forest Service will not release records detailing whom Conroy met with there, and Conroy refuses to say. But when Conroy returned, Fairbanks recalls, his boss was singing a new tune. "Conroy said, 'We've got to get more timber.' I told him, 'There's not 2 billion (board-feet) out there.' He said, 'Well, we're going to act like there is.' (Durbin 2005).

The Sessions report, less rigorously researched than the study that would call it into question, was immediately put to use by the Forest Service to rationalize increasing the harvest from the Biscuit burn area (*Decades: Born in Fire* 2007). Environmentalists

battling the logging sales argued that this report was crafted to support a particular political and economic decision; opponents to salvage logging, including notable conservation biologists, recognized this research as politically motivated and scientifically outdated. The report is a fairly typical example of politicized science, which the history of commodity forestry enables. It would take a forceful rebuttal from within the scientific tradition to force supporters of the Sessions report to confront the possibility of science producing a different kind of forest.

The Donato report was not solely authored by graduate student Dan Donato, although he became the spokesperson for the group. Donato and the team of researchers studied post-fire regeneration in sites that permitted salvage logging and those that did not. The purpose of the study was to determine if post-fire salvage logging is helpful or a hindrance to forest regeneration. Conventional forestry holds that logging and selective reseeding protects a fire-damaged forest from future conflagrations. The Donato report (2006) found the opposite to be true:

Our data shows that postfire logging, by removing naturally seeded conifers and increasing surface fuel loads, can be counterproductive to goals of forest regeneration and fuel reduction. In addition, forest regeneration is not necessarily in crisis along all burned landscapes. The results presented here suggest that postfire logging may conflict with ecosystem recovery goals (Donato, et.al. 2006, p.1).

The report also found that postfire logging “reduced regeneration by 71%, to 224 seedlings per hectare due to soil disturbance and physical burial by woody material during logging operations. Thus, if postfire logging is conducted in part to facilitate

reforestation, replanting could result in no net gain in early conifer establishment” (Donato, et. al. 2006, p.1). The report concluded that postfire logging is almost exclusively economically motivated. The research suggested that those favoring salvage logging would have to admit that their motivation was profit-driven. The report not only questioned the traditional position that logging is restorative, but it gave environmentalists an important resource in their efforts to anchor their position in ecological science.

The controversy over the Donato report inadvertently shed light on the connections between the timber industry and Oregon State University, and the University’s willingness to compromise academic integrity for economic relationships with the timber industry. After the Donato report was accepted for publication in the prestigious journal *Science*, Hal Salwasser and several professors wrote a letter to the journal editor requesting the article be withheld from publication (Halcomb 2007). In an email with the Oregon State University Government Relations Office, Salwasser admitted, “Yep, we’re walking the line on academic freedom and censorship with internal review. This will be delicate to handle but the fallout from our constituents is pretty fierce; not good at this stage in the campaign. They are dredging up all the old owl stories about how OSU sank the timber industry” (FOIA documents). The email makes clear that the University was aware that their campaign against Donato was ethically tenuous, and it exposed that the real constituents of the public university were its private donors, in this case, the timber industry. The constituency should be the public and students, and the University should be firm in its commitment to public knowledge and academic rigor. Instead, the historical alliances between the timber industry and forestry research created

the conditions in which the College of Forestry prioritized industry friendships over their own integrity.

### **The Salwasser Letter**

Salwasser worked closely with Chris West of the AFRC to draft statements for the CoF faculty as well as the media. West and Salwasser agreed that a “group of scientists” needed to write a letter of rebuttal to the Donato report and requested that the journal *Science* refrain from publishing it (FOIA documents). Salwasser wrote a letter that circulated among the College of Forestry faculty to suggest the Donato report conclusions were incomplete, and while he supported a range of perspectives, he cautioned that the report was not ready for publication, or to be seriously considered as a basis for land management decisions (Salwasser 2006). The letter was not born out of concern for scientific integrity. An email from Associate Dean Hobbs to Salwasser revealed, “[Chris] suggested that if some of our faculty write a letter to science [sic] questioning Donato paper, the letter needs scientists from other universities sign it as well as OSU faculty. Chris thought it would carry more weight. I thought this was good advice” (FOIA documents). The quote referred to Chris West of the AFRC, whose interest was decidedly anchored in maximizing the timber harvest, and therefore supportive of the Sessions report. Not only was the research at Oregon State primarily funded by timber interests, but the way the University managed a plurality of scientific viewpoints and research outcomes was guided by the timber industry.

The Salwasser letter redirected questions about the efficacy of previous research on salvage logging into questions about the reliability of the Donato report as a single study in the face of a larger, contradictory body of knowledge. The letter, entitled

“Putting post-fire Logging and Reforestation Studies in Context” and published January 10, 2006, kept the Donato report separate from existing forestry wisdom on reforestation:

When single-study, short-term research results on a highly charged issue are controversial within the scientific community, it is important that the scientific debate occur on the full body of pertinent knowledge and that additional research be conducted if needed before drawing general conclusions is appropriate (Salwasser 2006).

In distinguishing between the Donato report and relevant, time-tested studies that generally support salvage logging, Salwasser casted doubt on the report as an addition to the body of pertinent knowledge. He also advised that policy decisions should not be based on new findings, but instead on the historical precedent of logging research. He detailed the shortcomings of the research design and the limitations of the findings, and supported CoF faculty to issue their own critical response (Salwasser 2006).

Salwasser resisted the new findings and championed current forest management practices such as those propped up in the Sessions report: “The first principles of natural forest regeneration processes, vigor of competition, opportunities to apply logging tools to meet silvicultural objectives, and pros and cons of slash management strategies in Southwest Oregon and elsewhere are well known and well established in the scientific literature” (Salwasser 2006). After throwing support behind logging as a forest management practice, he redirected the question away from salvage logging to ask:

What are the consequences of federal agency policies and processes that delay salvage logging and appropriate silvicultural operations for various lengths of time following wildfire?...What would have been the results [of the Donato study]

had they been logged in fall 2002 before natural regeneration had occurred and when fire-killed trees had maximum economic value to pay for subsequent reforestation, or in 2003, and followed with silvicultural observations appropriate to encourage the kind of forest conditions called for in management plans? (Salwasser 2006).

This not only put the Donato report on the defensive, but it took aim at the duration of the controversy that stalled logging operations. The timber industry's primary complaint – economic value for trees diminished significantly while lawsuits from environmentalist were settled – became Salwasser's scientific concern. He argued that silvicultural management and logging were appropriate responses to restore the fire damaged landscape; another conclusion from traditional forestry challenged in the Donato report. Salwasser concluded his letter with a call for academic freedom, and assurance that forestry science should not make policy recommendations, despite his clear desire to influence land management. Salwasser's letter to the CoF was first distributed to reporters at the Oregonian newspaper and was printed in the AFRC newsletter after it was vetted by friends in the timber industry (FOIA documents).

Not everyone in the College of Forestry agreed with Salwasser's political loyalty to the timber industry. Several scientists and professors in the CoF stood behind Dan Donato and the report's publication. CoF faculty Boone Kaufman wrote to Salwasser, "The message I would be most concerned with is the lack of support for the graduate students and faculty whose research may be contrary to a more traditional utilization perspective" (FOIA documents). Members of the public, alumni from the CoF, and regional firefighters wrote to Salwasser and expressed concerns over academic

censorship, favoritism to timber interests, and putting firefighters at risk with a management plan primarily concerned with maximizing harvest opportunities. Jerry Franklin, a forestry scholar who participated in numerous policy debates on salvage logging and old growth protection, and a key actor in the spotted owl issue in the 1990s, made an impassioned case to Salwasser: “In any case, ABSOLUTELY reforestation and salvage are separate activities and neither depends on the other! We have reforested for decades, yea a century, without doing salvage logging!” (FOIA documents). In an odd moment of confluence, this sentiment was seconded by Scott Conroy, who wrote that the Forest Service’s interest in salvage logging was primarily to recover economic value from downed trees, and he did not consider salvage a reforestation activity (Conroy 2006).

One wildland firefighter shared with Salwasser how the science debates had been perceived by some members of the public: “The implementation of OSU’s recommendations on the Biscuit have widely been viewed as a failure, a multimillion dollar boondoggle...That the same scientists who orchestrated this fiasco now criticize Mr. Donato for hijacking the scientific process seems patently absurd” (FOIA documents). He concluded with a call for scientific moderation and integrity. “There is a middle road between zero cut and monoculture, and science maps that way. As leaders in the scientific community, I ask that you keep these roads open...” (FOIA document). Comments like these offer a window into the disconnect between the University’s view of forestry and that of the community, even those members who make a livelihood in the forest.

Calls for moderation between logging and natural recovery were lost between the dueling worldviews of environmental activists and the groups that favored salvage logging. Although almost none of the environmental groups were categorically opposed to all logging, their tactics and sometimes aggressive stand against logging precluded conversations about moderation. This middle ground perspective is precisely the kind of political concession that activists fear will not challenge the commodification of forests. In response to environmentalists who questioned the Sessions report, Salwasser took a predictably critical stance against environmentalists who, beyond stymieing logging efforts, questioned his power to encourage such activities.

In his correspondence with the timber industry, Salwasser was openly hostile to environmentalists. In an email to Jennifer Phillipi, co-owner of Rough n' Ready Lumber, which was opened by her grandfather in 1923 (Learn 2013) Salwasser shared his view on anti-logging activism:

Jennifer, These activist groups set up all the hurdles that make these projects money losers then they complain that the agency loses money so the projects should not be done. These [sic] is, in my mind, nothing more duplicitous being foisted on society by these scam artists. The tree theater, threats of appeals and lawsuits is also nothing more than a new wrinkle on the ‘protection’ tactics used by the mafia in our society for years. I can’t call these goons out from my position but someone must bring this to light eventually. This is not ‘environmental protection’ but extortion (FOIA documents).

Salwasser linked organized crime to environmental activism, and challenged activism’s claim on substantial scientific evidence for their arguments. Instead, he characterized

environmental protection as a violent, criminal activity. Not only did he reduce activism to bully behavior, but he strengthened the discursive connection between activism and terrorism found in AEPA and from the mouths of Congressmen. As recently as spring of 2013, Oregon Representative Wayne Krieger has been quoted identifying tree-sitting, chaining bodies to equipment, and road blockades as the work of “environmental terrorists” (Potter 2013). These are not passing remarks, and Salwasser’s view of environmentalism is more than talk. As Oregon considers two bills that would make non-violent civil disobedience felony offenses, the rhetoric of activism as a criminal activity is profoundly threatening to environmentalists.

Salwasser goes on to argue that strategies like lawsuits and administrative actions are “extortion,” a legal term that describes the coercive nature of property extraction used by organized crime. For Salwasser, the property in question was clearly not that of the environmentalists, who purport to represent the public to protect the commons, otherwise their actions would not be considered extortion, but defense. The property, then, belonged to the timber industry. Salwasser participated in the production of forests as fictitious commodities. As Polanyi (2001) makes clear, nature is not inherently a private good. Because it is not “naturally” property, it must be designed as property, through laws that protect the timber industry’s claims on trees, to the heavy subsidies that support an unsustainable appetite for forests.

Beyond feeling dubious about environmentalist tactics, Salwasser directly attacked the individuals within the movement. Although his preference for timber interests suggested care for local people economically dependent on the wood products economy, he did not consider that they, too, may be the activists. Many were. Perhaps if

he did, he would have hesitated calling environmentalists “goons,” a term synonymous with hired thugs and idiotic brutes. Although the practices of deforestation and salvage logging are frequently criminal activities (illegal logging, illegal tree marking, illegal road building, illegal sales, arson, bribery, etc.), these are considered uncharacteristic mistakes in the business of forestry, not the regular practice of land management. Salwasser did not consider that environmentalists, both direct action and mainstream, had thoughtful, logical, and important arguments, or that their ontological view of the forest was a valid premise to build a forest management plan.

Most activists I interviewed were not categorically opposed to logging; they were anti-salvage logging, an argument for which they drew on substantial philosophical, aesthetic, and scientific thought. Whether acting as “muscle” or filing a lawsuit, environmentalists were, in Salwasser’s estimation, thieves trying to rob the timber industry of what is rightfully theirs: forests for profit. Salwasser’s enthusiasm for attacking environmentalists might have been exaggerated for the benefit of his target audience; or it might not. While activists generally retain concern for local businesses impacted by logging conflicts, in this instance, the willingness to engage in empathetic thinking was not reciprocated. The cautious approach towards salvage logging was not exclusively among environmentalists; the state of Oregon hotly debated whether or not to log or leave the forest to natural regeneration.

### **A State Divided over Salvage Logging**

The claim that the post-fire state of the forest was an “emergency condition” became the basis of a power struggle over the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act (FERRA) in 2006, sponsored by Greg Walden, a Republican Oregon state

representative historically sympathetic to the timber industry. This act was proposed as a response to the lengthy proceedings to determine what can be logged and what should be protected after a fire or other so-called catastrophe. Some of the sales, like Mike's Gulch and the Fiddler, were in previously inventoried roadless areas, so opening those to logging was a drawn out and embittered struggle that kept loggers out of the forest while the value of available salvage diminished (Interview data, subject 7, 2012). The policy intended to improve the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior's ability to quickly implement recovery treatments, including logging (H.R. 4200). Catastrophic events like wildfire "eliminates sources of seed for desired trees and plant species and reduces economic value of the damaged land resources" (H.R. 4200). These treatments would aid in recovering "damaged by still merchantable material before it loses economic value" (H.R. 4200). Dead and damaged trees included those that were severely broken and had a high probability of dying within 5 years after the catastrophic event. These treatments would be classified as "pre-approved management practices", technically in accordance with NEPA, but in practice exempt from an EIS and public participation.

As then-governor Ted Kulongoski said, logging Mike's Gulch was "unnecessary and unwise" and that:

opening this particular roadless area to salvage logging now - when we are in the process of preparing a petition to the federal government on the proper management of those areas - contradicts the assurances the Bush administration has made that the governors' opinions on such issues will be respected (Knickerbocker 2006).

Oregon became a state divided. While Kulongoski petitioned for roadless area protection, the state considered FERRA. Just like the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, the bill would permit expedited logging on public land. Unlike HFRA, this bill acknowledged that logging was not just an ecological response to fire, but an economic one as well. This enabled the Forest Service and logging companies to rebuild public land primarily as tree farms while limiting the power of citizens to demand other uses and values of the forest. Despite passing in the Oregon state House of Representatives, the bill did not survive. Like HFRA, the arguments for and against this bill hinged on different views of forestry.

### **Conclusion**

As the Forest Service's mechanisms for controlling public involvement gave way to direct action, civil disobedience, and litigation, the Biscuit was both a focusing event for environmental organizations and a revelatory experience where their ontological positioning and their political strategies could be evaluated side by side. The fire itself was an active agent that shaped the forest regardless of economic or ecological preference. The intensity, location, and duration of the fire created the conditions for the ensuing political battle. As Stephen Pyne has argued throughout much of his writing on forest fires, the fire does not care about humans, and the fire is a powerful force that determines the composition of forests, at times more so than human intervention. Fires will take place regardless of the manner of control and remediation applied to forests, and the failure of humans to reconcile the inevitability of the presence and force of fires to their land management programs is a significant barrier to dealing with the human and non-human impacts of conflagrations.

This is evident in salvage logging controversies like the Biscuit, where humans use forest fire as a “primitive scene” or an ecologically empty space to redesign the forest within the framework of their ontological values of what the forest should be. To salvage log or not became a question of tremendous import: What was the forest supposed to be, what kinds of human intervention were appropriate, and what other deep issues of economic and ecological justice were connected to the plight of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. Just as the Native Americans who originally managed the land were marginalized in decisions about reforesting the Rogue-Siskiyou, the ontological assumptions carried by environmentalists (that forests are intrinsically valuable) was considered secondary to science-based views of what a healthy forest looks like. Debates in the state, in Oregon State University, and among the environmental organizations and the Forest Service were centered on whose science would inform policy decisions.

The policy battles fit into a broader set of concerns about the major institutional systems that enabled salvage logging and perpetuated a capitalistic land management process that considered forests as standing reserves. There was little space for alternate perspectives that prioritized the ecological needs of this particular region, without losing sight of the timber-dependent communities that would surely not have agreed to a strictly “hands-off” view of forest management. None of the environmentalists that I interviewed subscribed to an anti-logging perspective, and many recognized that parts of the forest already managed as tree farms should continue to do so, which would provide logging jobs and revenue for these towns. I asked each interview subject which economic activities they considered permissible in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. Each agreed that harvesting tree farms was acceptable, as little else could be done with that

land. They also supported light logging, employing people for restoration projects, and non-industrial scale activities like recreation and harvesting food and shelter materials for at-home and community use (Interview data, subjects 1,2,3,4,5,6, & 7; 2012).

Environmentalists, from radical to mainstream, favored limited, ecologically-mindful economic practices, and cared about the economic needs of towns dependent on the forests for their livelihoods and for county funding. These perspectives, however, were not included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, nor did the Forest Service elicit the kind of deliberative democratic processes that would have brought these considerations to the fore and allowed for meaningful, realistic options to emerge that could have satisfied more interests than the timber industry and the agency itself.

Radical and mainstream environmentalists worked to connect the salvage logging controversy with the overarching problem of capitalism driving forest management. Communicating these ethical concerns with capitalism and with the FEIS became a tremendous task for all of the stakeholders. Environmental organizations struggled to speak about forest management outside of language already limited to current and future profit potential. In part because much of the controversy hovered over the scientific research and political use of that research about salvage logging, the gap between ethics and politics was largely bridged by empiricism, rather than philosophical, aesthetic, and spiritual values. The political actions undertaken by environmental organizations and by the timber industry were severely limited by the means of public participation available, while other strategies were disregarded by the state. The next chapter will explore the tactics used by environmental organizations and why their

ontological positions aimed at defining the forest were not effective as political action directed at protecting the forest from capitalist interests and practices.

## **Chapter 5: The Landscape of Political Responsibility**

This chapter will evaluate the political strategies that were used by environmental organizations that fought the salvage logging sales, and how those political positions failed to overcome the limitations of activism within a framework of liberal responsibility. Despite the differences in ethical positions and political strategies, none of the organizations transcended the history of environmentalism in the U.S., which has long relied on calls for individual responsibility as a solution to environmental issues (Szasz 2007). Environmental activism is often portrayed by popular media, and by industries at odds with environmentalists, as a singular, coordinated response to an ecological crisis, public health problem, or instance of some communities disproportionately carrying environmental burdens. Environmentalism, however, is diverse, divisive, cooperative, controversial, and heavily shaped by geographic, cultural, and economic contexts.

Environmental organizations, individual activists, state agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency, and private interests often converge on a particular environmental issue from highly differentiated perspectives and goals (see chapter 4). The strategies and anticipated outcomes of an Earth First! collective will typically be at odds with those of the Forest Service, which may be locked in a courtroom battle with Greenpeace, which may be fighting over strategies and community support with regional non-profit organizations, all of whom may run afoul of local community members who see no dissonance between their love for the forest and their labor to log the land (see chapter 4). Both scholarship and popular media tend to overlook the great diversity of ontological, epistemological, and strategic positions within the environmental movement.

One consequence of this failure is an incomplete assessment of land use and environmental conflicts, and of the range of potential outcomes (from revolutionary to legislative change). Indeed, the conflict itself is shaped by the friction and cooperation among environmentalists.

This controversy over post-fire salvage logging offers an opportunity to explore how different environmental political approaches work in practice, and how much those practices differ from, or remain close to, an organization's ethical grounding. These acts of environmental responsibility take place in the political, economic, and social context of the controversy itself. Radical environmentalists in the Rogue-Siskiyou were influenced by the ecology of that particular forest, and they were sensitive to those communities in which they lived and organized their political strategies. As I have experienced in my own political activism in Oregon, many activists come from within the communities that are economically connected to a particular natural resource conflict, while others bring an outsider's perspective from urban centers and universities. This diversity of perspectives creates a network of ideas and actions endemic to a particular site or set of environmental concerns.

The theoretical divisions among the different environmental groups – some participated in direct action, while others rejected this as a strategy incompatible with their organization – were confronted with the reality of these different groups living in the same area, caring for the same forest, and their connection to one another through previous relationships. In addition to proximity, the urgency to stop salvage logging as the land sales were taking place required groups to find ways to cooperate, and to determine what their boundaries would be to protect their own sense of responsible

action. The purpose of examining these relationships within the environmental movement is to consider what transpires in the gap between environmental ethics and environmental responsibility, how activists practice environmental responsibility, and to learn from the Biscuit case what strategies may be effective in future land use conflicts.

Deconstructing environmentalism and approaches within these struggles can help environmentalists reflect on what they want from their campaigns and actions, if their strategies and their visions are congruous with local conditions, what those power relationships may look like in these communities, and if cooperation among various environmental groups is possible without subordinating some approaches to others. I use the Biscuit post-fire salvage logging controversy as a case study to explore the variations in environmental approaches, and why some epistemic discourses were prioritized over others in communicating the value of the forest beyond that of commodity. As radical activists, moderate environmentalists, and local community members converged on the conflict, the disunity and cooperation among the different organizations opened up some pathways for communicating (largely through ecological forestry) and precluded others (revolutionary aims). As each group took up their own set of strategies, the cooperation between moderate and radical environmentalists became a cooptation of radical strategies like direct action, for liberal outcomes, like legislative change.

I take particular interest in the radical and direct action groups, which presented a political and ideological challenge to the timber industry and to the Forest Service, as well as to the more mainstream environmental organizations that worked alongside of them. I argue that while the various groups willingly cooperated with one another throughout most of the political battle, the mainstream environmentalists gained more

strategically, and lost less ideologically, by cooperating with the radical groups than they did of their relationships with the mainstream groups. I do not necessarily critique this cooperation in itself, instead I consider if the framework of liberal responsibility limits environmentalists from considering other political approaches and goals.

### **Behind the activism: Theoretical framework**

#### **Beyond Liberal Responsibility in Environmentalism**

The environmental movement in the U.S. has a history of group and community disputes, like Love Canal and the first Earth Day. While environmentalism has never been a wholly collectivized movement, early battles in the 1960s and 1970s typically targeted private companies responsible for reckless behavior, and often called for government intervention to stop degrading practices and to produce a plan for remediation (Gottlieb 2005). Contemporary environmentalism is largely practiced on an individual level, with at-home and at-the-store personal decisions as acts of care for the planet. While environmental organizations like the Sierra Club still hold rallies in public places, these serve as temporary public awareness campaigns, and they do not demand the presence of or response from private industry and public agencies. After a single afternoon of speakers and chants participants return to their daily lives, where they are encouraged to financially support the campaign, to spread information within their communities, and to consider how they can personally make lifestyle changes, like installing solar heating systems in their own homes (“Stand with the Planet” 2013). The collective action is short-term and symbolic, and the real work of environmentalism is expected to take place on an individual level.

A person's ethical basis for environmentalism often transforms into individualized, rather than collectivized, political action. This is evident in the rise of green consumerism (Szasz 2007), various schemes to zero net impact on carbon emissions from one's activities, and the disconcerting observation that more people give money to environmental non-profits like the Sierra Club than participate in the environmental movements themselves (Putnam 2001). Liberal responsibility complements green capitalism (Hawken, Lovins & Lovins 2008; McDonough & Braungart 2002). The urge to fight various environmental ills, from climate change to deforestation, is often considered an individual choice rather than a collective necessity, and this energy is easily channeled into the dynamic marketplace of products, offsets, pledges, home design, hygiene, and food consumption generously termed "green capitalism," although among many environmentalists, "green" is less an endorsement and more of a guffaw (Clark, Foster & York 2009). Just as the mainstream environmental movement often fails to push beyond green capitalism, resistance to salvage logging in the Biscuit struggled to move from individual ethical orientations to collective political action.

### **Environmental Responsibility**

Environmental responsibility is often conceived in the liberal tradition, which favors tracing causal relationships between individuals and specific acts of consumption or behavior that contribute to global, regional, or local environmental decline. This assumes individuals possess autonomy, regardless of structural, economic, and social contexts. As Chad Lavin (2008) wrote, "Liberal responsibility, I argue, restricts our ability to perceive problems and then suggests ways to respond to those events that

receive recognition; it directs attention toward social events and conditions that conform with its suppositions while casting into a discursive neverland those conditions and events that do not” (p.3). The ontopolitical assumption that individuals exercise free will and are freely acting agents is the basis for mainstream environmentalism. From the Environmental Protection Agency to organizations like The Nature Conservancy (“What’s my Carbon Footprint?”), individuals are asked to audit their lifestyles and look for opportunities to act differently, from choosing greener energy sources to composting organic waste. These actions suggest individuals have a consumer choice that enables them to live within specific ethical ideas of the human/nature relationship, without acknowledging the relative political futility of these actions. Aside from encouragement to contact local and national lawmakers regarding specific legislation to be passed or blocked, the extent of political responsibility among groups who are directly and indirectly experiencing environmental problems is often limited by the presumed extent of their individual capacity for change and action, and the ability to empirically determine their contribution to an environmental problem on an individual level.

This is problematic for several reasons. First, the ontopolitical basis for mainstream environmental responsibility overlooks context and the multiplicity of individual subjectivity. As Lavin (2008) argued, “the liberal emphasis on autonomy, postliberals claim, reifies subjective desire, distracting from systemic coercions and disciplinary mechanisms that lead to events that we arbitrarily attribute to individual actors” (p.11). Liberal responsibility, then, is better suited to “discussing events than conditions” (Lavin 2008, p.14). To discuss an event would be to argue that salvage logging in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest impedes forest regeneration. To discuss

the conditions would be to contextualize salvage logging in the political, economic, and social systems, patterns, and histories that made possible this particular event.

Mainstream environmentalism often fails to address conditions when it addresses events. This conception of responsibility limits responses and the way environmental events and issues are discussed.

Environmental discourses are told in this tradition, with individual “good guys” and “bad guys” considered responsible for specific actions, like Hal Salwasser, rather than identifying trends, patterns, and systems that produce Hal Salwassers or the context for Hal Salwassers to emerge. These stories overlook critical components to environmental issues and how they impact non-elite people (Fairclough 2010; van Dijk 1987). As such, this framework of liberal responsibility limits discussions, academic and popular, about grassroots resistance to environmental pressures (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003). These stories are sometimes restricted to the relations among direct stakeholders rather than the tangled web of actors, networks of power, and structural frameworks that enable and disable responses to environmental and social injustices. Even media coverage sympathetic to direct action focuses on individuals and state responses (typically police), fixing both as liberal, autonomous actors expressing their desires at the limit of their power (Abraham 2006b; *If a Tree Falls*, 2011).

The emphasis on the individual is even present in literature about radical environmental activism and resistance. In *Igniting Revolution*, Michael Becker spoke of the need for “ontological anarchism” or a radical openness to other beings. Becker (Best & Nocella, II 2006) offered:

By contrast, the ontology underlying ELF actions is directed toward spiritual identification and non-interference with the natural world, and demands a wholly different approach to and use of technology and science. Being is a creative, dynamic, interconnected whole. Both the openness to the independent reality of ‘others,’ and the insistence that this openness can emerge in a variety of ways, leads into what I will term *ontological anarchism*. Tacking ‘an-arche’ in a literal sense meaning ‘absence of a ruling principle,’ ontological anarchism insists on a ready openness to the experience of Being. Rejecting the notion that there is a final, definitive account of experience of Being may be ‘told’ in many different forms – from science and ceremony to philosophy and poetry (p.73).

This is a philosophically compelling argument, but it turns the question of radical environmental action and responsibility back on itself, the inward gaze limits the critique of mainstream environmentalism, and liberal responsibility, to individual value orientations. While a critique of mainstream values of the environment within late modern capitalism has merit, it is not an opening to discuss resistance movements and what they tell us about the practice of political responsibility. Connecting anarchism with exploring “being,” instead of as an evolving discussion about revolutionary tactics and ideas, limits anarchism to philosophical musings instead of using anarchism to consider action responsive to time-sensitive issues like global climate change and deforestation (Graeber 2004). While post-liberal environmental responsibility does not necessarily have to be anarchistic, the exploration of political options and strategies needs to be unbound by repetitive questions of ontology.

People who take up political responsibility for environmental problems often confront the question of “what is the alternative?” Critics of postliberal responsibility argue that this perspective leaves us without a way out of the problems; relativism becomes a way of explaining phenomenon while avoiding normative and strategic claims (Lavin 2008). In the absence of clear standards or a party platform, environmentalism that avoids liberalism must respond to the concern that it is all critique without productivity. Although they approach activism from the view of anarchism and ecocentrism, Best & Nocella, II, acknowledged that environmentalism does not always present a clear strategic pathway with concrete goals:

Revolutionary environmentalism spins off bits and pieces of decentralized socialism, libertarian anarchy, even tribalism, but does not advance a coherent alternative to global capitalism. It remains primarily a philosophy of ‘don’t’ in the face of ecological destruction and environmental alteration (Best & Nocella, II, 2006, p.42).

A “philosophy of don’t” is precisely the stigma that follows postliberal responsibility and radical environmentalism. While the ontological perspective of radical environmentalism is a useful way to describe the environmental and social pressures of a particular issue, it struggles to provide real suggestions for dismantling hierarchies of oppression and to offer alternative networks of power in the place of capitalism.

Radical environmentalism in the Biscuit case struggled to overcome preoccupation with ontological arguments and to move onto the complex work of making revolutionary change that was still pragmatically useful to those most immediately impacted by these issues. The philosophical basis for radical action limits what is

considered environmentalism, radicalism, and the right relationship between humans and nature. As Best & Nocella, II (2006) argued, acting responsibly towards environmental issues requires elements of deep ecology to guide the politics of change, otherwise oppressive hierarchies will seep into the solutions:

Action will only be truly revolutionary if it revolves around engagement in solidarity with nature, where liberation is always seen both as human liberation from the confines of Enframing and simultaneously as liberal of animal nations and ecoregions from human technics. Anything less will always lapse back into the false and oppressive hierarchy of ‘man’ over ‘nature’ and ‘man’ over ‘animals’ with attendant effects of technological, disciplinary control over humans, nonhumans, and the Earth (p.82).

“Anything less” marginalizes other ontological perspectives and whatever actions might follow those orientations. While the intention is to support action that breaks out of well-worn views on environmental problems and solutions, it can also overlay western philosophy over indigenous communities, land-based labor communities, and even non-humans, who are oddly imagined to socially organize as “nations.” In this iteration, the essence of environmental responsibility is an extension of philosophy, a manifestation of ontology, not an act of responsibility directed at specific problems. While Best & Nocella, II, and Timothy Morton offer alternatives to liberal responsibility, they are unable to articulate a post-liberal vision or set of strategies.

In both Best & Nocella, II and in Morton’s work, capitalism is vague in reference and description. Best & Nocella, II assume that activists know what the effects of capitalism are on the environment, or assume that when capitalism is mentioned it

produces the same data reference points for everyone. The language of authenticity maintains barriers between those who are “real environmentalists” and those who are not. Presumably loggers living around the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest would not fit this description of an authentic environmentalist because they are economically dependent on forests, they are not opposed to logging, and they don’t often join environmentalists who organize to protect forests from land management decisions. Centering action on an ethical platform that excludes many impacted communities does not build an environmental movement suited for addressing the complexity of pressures on at-risk ecosystems.

Scholars outside of the radical environmentalism movement have worked to construct a postmodern or poststructural vision of the human/nature relationship that pulls away from individual liberal responsibility. One such perspective comes from Timothy Morton. In his book *The Ecological Thought* (2010), he thinks about the human/nature relationship in the absence of the binary distinction, but without extension of selfhood from deep ecology (see Chapter 1). Morton’s philosophy culminates in his ethic of the non-self (Morton 2010). This ethic tries to explain how the individual can come to terms with being part of “the mesh,” his term for the interconnectivity of all living and non-living beings in a non-hierarchical scheme. To do so, and to do so responsibly, humans should not try to assign responsibility to specific people, companies, or natural causes of environmental problems, but rather they should mobilize however they can to act in response to environmental issues. He is unclear whether or not this kind of radical ethic can take place within a capitalist system. Similarly, he does not provide a vision of a different system of economic and social relations that might facilitate the

transition to his worldview. Just as Best & Nocella, II emphasize the ontological basis for radical environmentalism, Morton fixates on the proper orientation between people and other things, to the exclusion of identifying practical strategies for performing environmental responsibility outside of the limitations of liberalism.

While there are similarities between Lavin's critique of liberal responsibility and Morton's vision for poststructural ecological awareness, Morton stops short of asserting what a poststructural or postliberal responsibility looks like. I look at Morton and Best & Nocella, II together because they each speak to the shortcomings of modern environmentalism, especially the ontological and ethical basis for environmental concern and action. In their own voices, they describe what environmental responsibility should not be, and on what philosophical grounds responsibility should be based. These works demonstrate the difficult task of thinking through environmental responsibility and action without falling back to an abstract discussion of ethics and ontology. In the absence of application to environmental problems, theoretical work like this remains stuck in the gap between ethics and action. It is within this gap that I take up the investigation of how radical environmental groups, the ones with the greatest potential to turn the logging controversy into the basis for a profound change in the conception and management of forests, struggled to actualize their stated goals. I argue that this gap is best considered through case studies and context-specific events and concerns, otherwise theorizing will fail to meet the physical reality of environmentalism.

### **Rationalizing Activism**

The variations of environmental activism that took place in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, as well as in courtrooms, boardrooms, and college campuses, revealed

the limitations of speaking ethics to politics. As environmentalists in the Biscuit quickly realized, their ontological relationship with the forest was not necessarily their political relationship to the same forest. Strategically adjusting their campaigns to meet what they perceived to be the way to the “hearts and minds” of the public disclosed the dissonance between ontology and responsibility in political action (Interview data, subject 2, 2012). Activism in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest was a mash-up of scientific ecology, deep ecology, and pragmatism. Calls for action centered on ecological science rather than other values associated with forests and forest protection.

Over the last year, I interviewed individuals who directly participated in protesting salvage logging in the post-fire burn areas. The interviewees came from mainstream, regional, and radical organizations. Some of the interviewees acknowledged that while their deepest motivations were primarily their love for, and attachment to, that particular forest, they preferred to describe their political position in terms of ecology. While these interviews do not represent all of the activists who were part of the Biscuit post-fire controversy, their stories give life to the discourse analysis and theoretical framework of this chapter.

I argue that though environmental responsibility throughout the effort to stop post-fire salvage logging was rooted in environmental ethics, the public discourse produced by environmentalists was anchored in the science of ecology and articulated through the language of forestry. Would a focus on the other values of a forest (spiritual, social, cultural, etc.) have undermined the campaign to protect the post-fire area? Would a more integrative campaign that invoked the multiple values at stake (anti-capitalism, access to public land, etc.) have produced a different outcome? These questions require

critical analysis of environmentalism beyond the politics of pluralism, beyond strictly environmental ethics, and beyond actor-network theory. To understand the strategies employed by the various environmentalist responses, I first explore the role of science in politics of the controversy.

### **Knowledge and the Basis for Activism**

Political action in the Biscuit was centered on a group of environmental non-profit organizations. The Forest Service was the primary target of these groups, but protestors also targeted the timber companies bidding for the sales; Columbia Helicopter, the company that would receive the contract for heli-logging the salvage sites; Douglas County, widely regarded as dependent on timber money and therefore inclined to support logging; and the Oregon State University forestry department, specifically Hal Salwasser, the Dean of the School of Forestry. Salwasser found himself in his own controversy after conclusive evidence revealed that he worked closely with timber companies and the AFRC, and he supported the movement to discredit the Donato report, a published academic paper co-authored by graduate student Dan Donato, that defied traditional forestry, which endorsed salvage logging in a post-fire landscape (*Decades: Born in Fire* 2007; see chapter 4).

In part because the salvage logging controversy centered on competing scientific discourses, environmental organizations, like the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, took up science-based arguments to stop salvage logging (“Fire Ecology and Policy”). The Donato report, alongside the findings of scientists, ecologists, and biologists working for the involved environmental organizations, argued that the forest recovery flourished where there was limited human activity, including minimal restoration, and especially

where there was an absence of logging and other machine-intensive activity (Donato, et.al. 2006). The report found that seedlings were present and thriving, which would be crushed under a logging operation (Durbin 2005). John Sessions and the Forest Service posited that forests need fuel reduction (i.e. targeted logging) because the fragile post-fire ecosystem was so vulnerable that another fire or disturbance would threaten its ability to regrow at all (Sessions, et.al. 2004).

These dueling perspectives were taken up by, and influenced by, the various political actors with a stake in the management of the Rogue-Siskiyou. As I argued in Chapter 4, the School of Forestry at Oregon State University, and the logging companies that stood to profit from salvage logging, supported the Sessions Report, and in some cases contributed to its funding. The ecological forestry perspective was championed by forest ecologists who produced scholarly research and who worked for, and volunteered for, the regional environmental organizations that fought to keep salvage logging out of the Biscuit post-fire burn areas (Interview data, subject 7, 2012). The science and politics of this controversy were deeply intertwined. This is not to suggest that the scientific research was too subjective to be of use, or that science and politics should (or even could) be separated. Rather, the scientific research did not just lend itself to particular political points of view, but the same individuals acting in both political and scholarly capacities shaped these views.

Influenced by the controversy in the School of Forestry, this particular environmental conflict was often limited to argumentation that pulled from each group's respective science-based perspectives on logging. While ecological science is a valid basis for activism, it does not capture all of the reasons why a political response is needed

in the face of a particular problem. Other values, such as those articulated by EF! and other organizations concerned with economic and social justice issues, are given little space in forest ecology. Arturo Escobar (2008) encountered this same limitation with the sciences in his own research, and wrote:

There is a tremendous paradox here: the modern exploitation of nature constituted a definitive intervention in the evolution of the ontological orders of nature and culture, hybridizing the real in ineluctable ways; each science (physics, biology, anthropology, etc.) was supposed to take charge of a given differentiated aspect of the hybrid entity, but these sciences are unable to offer a view of that reality that matches its complexity. This is the greatest paradox of modern knowledge; that is, given their focus on a particular object of knowledge, the sciences cannot know this complexity (p.130).

Despite the use of ecological forestry to provide a more comprehensive epistemology to understand both forest life and human contexts, this lens still failed to capture the complexity of forest defense, particularly in the Biscuit, where defining the value of a forest was central to the fight among the stakeholders. This inadequacy shaped the mobilization to stop logging in the Biscuit, and it is evident in other land-use struggles that often include struggles over property rights, colonialism, environmental degradation, and a desire for a radical reorientation of capitalist systems. These concerns are limited by the dominance of scientific and western thought as the primary way to explain environmental issues (Escobar 2008).

The dueling scientific studies are part of a larger distinction between ecological forestry and traditional forestry. The history of these differing frameworks is well

documented by Samuel Hays (2006). The traditional forestry taken up by John Sessions and others who favored salvage logging views trees as commodities and thinks of forests as standing economic resources. Restoration in this view means restoring economic potential, and using techniques like thinning and fuels reduction as a means to log. On the contrary, ecological forestry takes a broad view of biological relationships among the constituent parts of the forest while resisting the temptation to prioritize the human relationship above others. This is also considered a “scientific systems approach,” and it is this epistemological approach that appealed most to environmentalists and activists.

Escobar (2008) wrote on the contribution to political thinking made by ecology:

This approach tended to reproduce the basic tenets of realism at a higher level – namely, identifying truth as the correspondence of holistic knowledge with a total, albeit complex, reality. Nevertheless, to the extent that systems approaches emphasized the whole over the parts; relations, feedback, and interactions over the study of particular properties and the function of distinct elements, they contributed to unsettling the epistemology of mainstream science. Systems thinking informed the development of various ecological approaches in anthropology, from the early world on adaption in the cultural ecology of the 1950s to ecosystem ecology approaches after the 1960s (p.123).

More than traditional forestry, ecological forestry mirrored the worldview of the activists who saw environmentalism and forest defense as part of a network of oppression and degradation of all life on the planet, human and non-human. How these organizations addressed the multiple offenses bound up in the salvage logging controversy varied significantly: Some chose not to engage issues beyond protecting whistleblowers within

the Forest Service (Interview data, subject 8, 2012); others focused on protecting the forest on its ecological merits; while others affiliated with radical environmental groups like Earth First! made explicit that environmental activism was an attack on capitalism and other forms of oppression. However, all activism in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest was rooted in ecological thinking and science (Interview data, all subjects, 2012).

The scientific view of political responsibility is also largely a liberal view. While science has the potential to be politically radicalized, or to produce profound knowledge that challenges other ideological positions, it often does an inadequate job of accounting for the systemic pressures that create the conditions for a particular environmental crisis. Many forestry scientists involved in the Biscuit post-fire salvage logging debates did not take up an explicitly political view, but rather wrote their values for the forest into the scientific prescriptions for forest health and regional economic recovery (Interview data, subject 7, 2012).

Those ecologists and forest scientists who did participate in the politics of the controversy limited themselves to rebutting other scientific studies, to raising public awareness of forest ecology, and to advocating for administrative and legal changes. They did not connect forest protection with other social and political justice issues, they did not participate in direct action, and they did not advance political or ethical conceptions of the human/nature relationship beyond a basic stewardship of and respect for the forest. While the Warner Creek battle between radical activists and the Forest Service found forestry scientists like Timothy Ingalsbee on the frontlines of direct action encampments and blockades (Abraham 2006b), the forestry experts with significant influence in this controversy remained in their institutional homes.

## **Ecological Forestry as a Political Strategy**

Ecological thinking and science is a substantial base for calling out environmental degradation. This scientific approach recognizes non-economic values of the forest and is therefore not limited to studying these ecosystems in terms of agricultural production or as tree farms. The complexity of forests and their relationship to humans is part of the science itself. However, it does not provide a strong vocabulary to express the ethical underpinnings of environmentalism, or what the appropriate political responses ought to be. Beyond ethics, ecological science needs to be connected to economic and political structures, and to power imbalances that shape the crisis in order for it to be a strong basis for environmental responsibility. One of the reasons why radical environmentalists turned to ecological science, rather than towards their other political motivations for involvement, was to present the case that the timber industry, the College of Forestry at Oregon State University, and the Forest Service were in collusion with one another to present a political and economic position – that the Rogue-Siskiyou should be salvage logged – as a scientifically valid land management decision (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). Most of the activists I interviewed expressed some version of this concern.

Activism, in this case, meant proving through sound science that the Forest Service was basing their forest restoration strategy on political and economic relationships. The science in their decision was funded by timber interests, and was too compromised to hold up to the ecological forestry that regarded forest health above a forest's economic productivity. One activist from the Oxygen Collective described research like the Sessions report to be “bought” by Douglas County, and that salvage logging was: “a politically driven decision...a payback to the timber industry who funded

the Bush election for that part of the world [rural Oregon]" (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). This accounts for the opinion of many activists, from mainstream to radical organizations, who did not trust the science used by the Forest Service in their decision to open up land for salvage logging.

Salvage logging became a code for political favors, for draining public land to make profit for private timber companies, and to strip away federal protections from land that had otherwise been off-limits to logging. While activists used ecological forestry to support their political desires for the land, they lost track of the range of pressures that enabled traditional forestry science to be used as the basis for policy-making. While activists correctly used ecological science as a basis for taking up environmental responsibility, they were unable to use that to move beyond accusing some actors of behaving selfishly; a form of resistance that falls in-line with the working definition of liberal responsibility taken up in this research.

Limiting the conversation about salvage logging in the Biscuit to science wars implies that environmentalism is only observable and justifiable through specific epistemic structures, structures that have historically been used to subordinate non-Western approaches to human/nature relationships, and that have provided the foundation for the definition of sustainability that has kept the timber industry profitable for over a century. Despite ethical resistance to salvage logging, and the nagging tug of personal responsibility that comes with recognizing an injustice, environmental activism in the Biscuit centered on using different versions of forestry science to produce a political argument. This forced them to demand policy changes with immediate physical impact on the forest, rather than addressing structures and systems that would radically alter the

human/nature relationship (Interview data, all subjects, 2012). As such, even radical environmentalists began to measure success by the outcomes of litigation against the Forest Service and by decisions made about the administration of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, even though these organizations generally opposed such political tactics (Interview data, subjects 1,5 & 6, 2012).

Although both litigation and administration are critical elements to improving or destabilizing forest health, they are ideologically incongruous with the stated goals of radical environmentalism, which typically holds to principles of non-compromise with the state (“Earth First!”). I argue that one of the reasons compromise and cooperation among environmental groups was dominated by the goals and tactics of mainstream environmentalism was because the campaign to stop logging was trapped in a nearly exclusive discourse of forestry science, rather than an open conversation where multiple values and the interconnection between these values and political and economic systems was possible. Because of this, direct action was less impactful as a statement against logging and the drive to commodify nature. Instead, radical activists became “the muscle” for moderate environmental groups (Interview data, subject 1, 2012). Direct action kept trees standing long enough for environmental non-profits to have administrative negotiations with the state; it did not pursue opposition to the state. Direct action, then, existed in a tense relationship between the immediate goal of protecting forests physically, and the long-term goal of shaping a new reality for forests and everything else, preferably a reality without a state.

During the Biscuit campaign, direct action found relative success with the immediate goal to slow logging, but participated in a process that provided substantially

more support for the timber industry goals than those of the activists. In anchoring their political goals in litigation and policy negotiation, activists conceded to working through the contexts in which the industry, and the Forest Service, had political advantage and significantly more power. The timber industry and the Forest Service are long accustomed to these battles, and worked through both FERRA and HFRA to eliminate access to these processes for activists and concerned citizens (see chapters 3 & 4). Direct action looked suspiciously like contract negotiations, perhaps an appropriation of civil disobedience by a neoliberal state.

It is within these limitations of the sciences that activists struggled when trying to articulate their positions during the Biscuit logging controversy. While they privately discussed the forest in terms beyond scientific epistemology, they felt bound to act politically through those very epistemological lenses, and to construct scientific narratives for forest defense (Interview data, subjects 1 & 5, 2012). This led them to a limited range of options for proceeding, and for determining wins and losses. Contract renegotiations became a win, but when forest defense was reinserted into their broader recognition of deforestation as part of a deeper problem with the commodification of nature, the successes looked less substantial. This tension between constructivism and essentialism is played out in resistance movements worldwide, and can help explain why these movements haven't successfully connected institutional critiques with specific environmental issues. Escobar (2008) recognized some of the tensions that slow movements from maximizing their political potential:

Social movements are faced with the need to hold these three regimes in tension:  
the local regimes, which they want to defend and transform from a position of

autonomy; the capitalist regime, the advancement of which they want to contain; and the techno regime, which, through processes of counterwork...and politics of scale they want to utilize for the defense of identity, territory, and place (p.145).

Social movements include the kinds of environmentalism that accepts the multiple contexts in which the natural environment exist. These movements struggle to maintain a system of ethics across various ideological and material goals, as well as identify the right set of political actions to take and support.

Direct action activists in particular were concerned with the local regime that Escobar described, and with maintaining a healthy relationship with those communities economically dependent on the timber industry. An activist from the Oxygen Collective explained that many forms of protest were considered, including more aggressive approaches to direct action than the ones they eventually took up (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). A critical factor in the Oxygen Collective's decision-making over which political strategies to take up, and which to reject, were the potential impacts these actions would have on local communities and their relationships to one another (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). A former member of the organization explained their role in connecting local communities to their radical goals: "A big part of that role was bridging that gap, so there was an action strong and radical enough so radicals would feel good about it, but so local moms and school teachers could be involved and still live in their community afterwards" (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). In some ways the direct action groups were limited by their own sensitivity to how local communities would feel about these actions taking place where they lived and worked. The timber industry claimed concern for local economic conditions, but they often pursued land management

decisions that would raze forests and draw away potential stability from tourism and long-term, small-scale logging projects.

This concern for the local regime was also strategic. If “everyday people” like schoolteachers and moms were willing to participate in civil disobedience to protect the forest, then perhaps the media, the Bush administration, the Forest Service, and the timber industry would recognize that these positions were not from the radical fringes, but from reasonable people who trusted good science and common sense. The local regime worked as an advantage and as a constraint to what might have otherwise been a more direct affront to the systemic influences on the logging controversy. However, in diluting the more radical political goals these organizations held, environmentalists were often unwittingly appropriated by politically liberal organizations seeking an agreement with the state to balance economic and ecological interests.

### **Performing Activism**

Activists from the environmental organizations expressed a range of perspectives and connections to the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, Babyfoot Botanical Area, and nearby wilderness areas. When asked in an interview what that particular forest meant, an activist replied they had a familial relationship with the forest and felt as though they were raised by it. This was followed up with a caveat that they also experienced the forest scientifically and professionally (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). These scientific views provided an empirical basis for forest defense, but at the heart was a strong personal connection unquantifiable by forest science. Another activist noted that the unique and rich biodiversity of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest made it all the more imperative to protect this particular ecosystem (Interview data, subject 7, 2012). However, another

strong motivation for protecting the forest was to ensure its survival so his children could appreciate it (Interview data, subject 7, 2012). There is no guarantee these children will view the forest through the lens of forest ecology, but that was not a concern, the forest experience would presumably be as impactful through more emotional means.

Another activist aptly summed up their ecological and personal connection to the forest: “I love the forest, to me the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest is an absolutely gorgeous, biodiverse, and kind of fragile and threatened place. My relationship was one of deep love, appreciation, and curiosity...and my connection was very physical; there was blood, sweat and tears left behind in the Rogue-Siskiyou” (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). Activism was defined personally, and the scientific understanding of forest ecology made it possible to recognize injustice in the logging plan. This recognition was a spark for political responsibility.

The science supporting the forest defense, and the ethical and personal relationships to the forest, are deeply interconnected. However, as individuals who shared these sentiments came together, the campaign materials and calls for action emphasized the Rogue-Siskiyou’s ecological attributes to the exclusion of other philosophical and aesthetic ways of connecting to the forest. As another activist shared, the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest was “amazingly complex and biologically diverse” with “unique rivers with fish runs, amazing old growth with habitat for a wide variety of species, including rare and endemic plant species that live in that area” it was an ideal resource for “recreation, solitude, and spiritual renewal” (Interview data, subject 7, 2012). These “other ways” are largely the kinds of connections and experiences that form the basis of an ethical relationship to the forest, while the scientific process produced a technical and

rational argument that lent itself to resolution through better policy-making. This was reflected beyond how individuals characterized their relationship with the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. The primacy of science as the basis for activism ran through the organizations and their public campaigns.

### **The Politics of Resistance**

The campaign and recruitment materials circulated by the radical environmental organizations reflected an emphasis on the science of forestry as a counter-argument for the timber sales. One flier produced by the Oxygen Collective declared, “Forests need fire!” and a call to:

Join us to advocate for the creation of the Biscuit fire natural recovery area and to raise awareness of the importance of protecting post-fire landscape nationwide.

The Bush Administration is trying to log our last native forests under the guise of post-fire salvage logging (Oxygen Collective flier 1, appendix B).

The call for action concluded with “Don’t let this happen to your forests...Stand up for fire affected forests before its [sic] too late!” (Oxygen Collective, flier 1, appendix B). This flier was a call for forest activists, and was co-sponsored by the Cascadia Forest Defenders. The term “Forest Defenders” generally references direct action and radical environmentalism, and is rarely invoked by moderate and mainstream environmentalists. However, the message, while an invitation to participate in direct action, did not reveal the radical political ideas of the Forest Defenders. Forest defense is intimately connected to anti-capitalism and a desire to end all logging, not just salvage logging. Without the full messaging from the group, they did not act as a threat or critique to capitalism.

Groups like the Cascadia Forest Defenders who affiliate with Earth First! are

typically concerned with social and identity politics, which they consider central to their mission to save the planet from modernization and industrialization (“Cascadia Forest Defenders”). Cascadia Forest Defenders have historically organized working groups for activists who identify as women, trans, and queer to equalize the power between women and straight, white men. Not only does Cascadia endeavor to make space within the organization for other voices, but in so doing it declares that targeting environmental destruction and identity and social justice issues are two sides of the same coin. The Wild Siskiyou Action Camp and Skill Share offered workshops on “climbing techniques, non-violence and direct action workshops, anti-oppression trainings, skillshares on fire ecology, letter writing, natural history, graphic design, radio communication, media, banner-making, and more” (Save the Wild Siskiyou, flier 2, appendix B). The range of workshops draws attention to the compound issues considered important enough to deal with concurrently. Anti-oppression work, paired with media tactics training and ecology lessons, represents one of the few ways the radical organizations opened up their efforts beyond defending an ecological idea.

Given the range of activities and trainings under the banner of “forest defense,” it comes as a surprise that the direct action campaign materials had an explicit focus on land management and ecology, with a clear omission of these other social and political concerns that are interconnected with the environmental. Another flier summarized what was at stake in the post-fire controversy:

The Biscuit logging project is the first to threaten roadless areas since the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was created and would cause about 48,000 acres (75 sq miles) of roadless areas to be ineligible for future wilderness

designation due to road fragmentation. The logging plan for the area would leave just 1.5 legacy trees ('snags') per acre – a virtual clearcut (Cascadia Forest Defense, flier 3, appendix B).

The flier indicated that the primary issue at stake was logging infringement on roadless protected areas and the ecological damage caused by present and future logging operations. Yet the Oxygen Collective, Earth First!, and Cascadia Forest Defense are all anti-capitalist organizations with concepts of the forest that broadly exceed an exclusively ecological construction. The flier channeled action in a specific way: To contact Oregon representatives, the US Federal District Court Judge sitting on the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, the District Ranger of the Illinois Valley District of the Siskiyou National Forest, the Oregon state governor, and Congressmen (Cascadia Forest Defense, flier 3, appendix B). The flier did not call for actions beyond formal communications with policymakers and representatives of the Forest Service. Credit for this publication was attributed to "Cascadia Rising! Ecodefense!!" a group affiliated with Earth First! and other forest watch groups.

In contrast to the way the EF! affiliates publicized their mission and strategies in this particular conflict, the Earth First! website described themselves thusly:

Are you tired of namby-pamby environmental groups? Are you tired of overpaid corporate environmentalists who suck up to bureaucrats and industry? Have you become disempowered by the reductionist approach of environmental professionals and scientists? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then Earth First! is for you. Earth First! is effective. Our front-line, direct action approach to protecting wilderness gets results. We have succeeded in cases where

other environmental groups had given up, and have drawn public attention to the crises facing the natural world (“Earth First!”).

Here, the organization is self-described in contrast to mainstream environmentalism that plays along with traditional and formal rules of engagement between citizens, government, and industry. Specifically, EF! criticizes mainstream environmentalism for cooperating with industry and government, rather than taking a hardline that requires these entities to accommodate the EF! agenda, which calls for revolutionary change in the relationship between humans and nature, in the capitalist economic system, and in the associated social and behavioral patterns found in late modern capitalism. Although radical environmental groups in the Biscuit post-fire defense held tree-sits, road blockades, and used other direct action techniques, they worked in conjunction with mainstream “namby-pamby” environmental organizations to stop the logging sales and maintain forestland as inventoried roadless areas. They also based their anti-salvage logging campaign on ecological forestry. Although the group’s general mission statement promises that EF! does not depend on science and forestry professionals, the specific campaign to protect the Rogue-Siskiyou was anchored to the research of these very same actors.

In fact, regional and less radical non-profits expressed gratitude that some were taking up the work of direct action to ensure forests stood while they pursued administrative and legal strategies (Interview data, subjects 3 & 4, 2012). One regional nonprofit noted that their Board of Directors did not approve the use of direct action, but the organization offered logistical support to direct action activists (Interview data, subject 3, 2012). They characterized the different approaches as maximizing the tools

available to each respective organization, rather than an ontological or political difference, though these organizations did maintain different conceptions of the human/nature relationship, as well as different long-term political goals. However, EF! and affiliated groups like Cascadia Forest Defenders did have different goals from their moderate counterparts, particularly the desire to dismantle capitalist and patriarchal systems, and a vision of an anarchist society over current governance and economic institutions.

Though individuals working for these organizations might have felt otherwise, the regional and mainstream groups themselves did not engage in revolutionary action or speech. How, then, did the environmentalism of EF! and Cascadia become compatible with mainstream environmentalism, despite the EF! stated aversion to these very perspectives and approaches to activism? Because radical activists depended so heavily on science-based claims for their political position to stop post-fire salvage logging, they were unable to effectively communicate and pursue their radical or revolutionary goals. They were also unable to effectively link multiple concerns, and seek progress towards these concerns, through specific campaigns. The immediate goal to stop logging overwhelmed the secondary goal to incite revolutionary change. In the process, the cooperative spirit among organizations, while arguably a useful model, challenges the EF! rules of incorporation (“Earth First!”).

Further, EF! claimed that they are able to draw attention to environmental issues where mainstream organizations fail to do so. In the case of the Biscuit, direct action earned significant media attention, but so too did the battle in the Oregon State University forestry department. The forestry department scuffle did not overshadow the challenge to

salvage logging taking place in the forest, or in the courtroom, but the presence of EF! and other radical organizations offered some, but not all, publicity to the issue. High profile conservation biologists like Dominick DellaSala and his public presence advocating for protection for ecologically sensitive parts of the post-fire landscape offered significant media attention and a body of knowledge upon which other environmental organizations could draw to build their arguments. Most of the scientists who were politically charged to challenge salvage logging in the Biscuit did not participate in direct action, though they contributed significantly to raising the profile of the conflict, which complemented the media goals of the more radical organizations.

An exception to the overwhelmingly scientific approach to earning political support to block salvage logging came from the Oxygen Collective. The Oxygen Collective considered itself anti-capitalist and radical, a response to the frustration of overly compromising mainstream environmental organizations (Interview data, subjects 5 & 6, 2012). The group itself remained formally unaffiliated, but some group members were part of decision-making bodies on regional environmental non-profits heavily involved in stopping the salvage logging sales (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). The Oxygen Collective toured the country in a bio-diesel fueled refurbished bus, playfully named “Priscilla” after the film *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, and produced theatrical performances to tell the story of the Biscuit fire and the logging controversy. The bus carried a flier across the side that read “Forests need fire! Salvage logging is a hoax!” (Interview data, subject 5, 2012). These performances are a good example of integrating political and scientific messages with a medium that did not prioritize the often structured and academic narrative style of sharing scientific research and perspectives. This method

intended to integrate the science of forestry with the political communication of theater. The Collective was especially interested in community outreach and earning support from those considered outside of the environmental movement as such. Therefore, appealing to people through strictly scientific arguments or through the radical values that grounded the organization would arguably alienate potential supporters and direct action activists from within affected communities.

Oxygen Collective fliers with photographs of those engaged in civil disobedience were rarely those of stereotypical activists: One might imagine young, white, college-aged, dreadlocks, black clothing adorned with political message patches, perhaps with a fist raised overhead, or a confrontational peace sign. Instead, photos carried images of older women, many identified as grandmothers, which sent several messages, including: Direct action was for everyone; that forest defense was not the exclusive purview of young radicals; and that the Biscuit case was impactful for local communities, and would have generational impact (identifying an older woman as a grandmother is to focus on the relationship to younger generations) (Oxygen Collective, flier 4, appendix B). The touring bus, theater act, and outreach strategies gained some media attention and encouraged activism. However, this did not represent a seamless integration of science and values. From my own anecdotal observations, the Oxygen Collective and other radical organizations struggled to cooperate together, and disagreed on strategies and goals. This critique aside, the Oxygen Collective did spend considerable energy integrating science with creative and energetic activism. Though they may not serve as ideal models, their willingness to speak about the Biscuit in a multitude of ways is a useful approach to validate a range of environmental values.

This version of environmental responsibility pulls from multiple strategies, many of which have been time-tested throughout the history of environmentalism. While the Oxygen Collective members maintained a deep ecology-like reverence for the Rogue-Siskiyou, their politics reflected concrete policy goals. Here, taking responsibility meant shunting aside what they imagined to be politically infeasible perspectives. They considered their ideas too philosophical and unapproachable to a mainstream audience, and they did not actively express their anti-capitalism perspectives. Instead, they pursued structure-affirming goals like policy changes and favorable court decisions, and generated public support through creative modes of ecological education (Interview data, subjects 5 & 6, 2012). While commendable, and some of the time successful, this is not an especially radical notion of environmental responsibility.

### **Conclusion**

The treatment of the salvage logging controversy by the environmental movement demonstrates how environmental political action can reify liberal responsibility as the basis for environmental responsibility, even from within radical organizations that explicitly reject working within liberal administrative systems for making change. Working through the Biscuit case study offers a way to understand local resistance as it emerges from specific contexts without reducing these movements or peoples to those contexts. Within the forest defense movement, there is a place for environmental ethics and for social justice politics. However, the environmental organizations involved in the Biscuit conflict feared that public campaigns would not gain support, or direct action would not draw activists, if the reason for forest defense was not framed in the same legitimate language and epistemological background as those who pressed for the logging

sales. Given the stories from regional activists, understanding the forest in terms of ecological science and biodiversity can facilitate a connection with the forest, but the desire to participate in forest defense still requires other kinds of relationships.

Why, then, do the campaign materials fail to address these other concerns for forest health? Escobar (2008) reflected on the variegated nature of environmental activism: “Activists are clear that sustainability cannot be conceived in terms of patches or singular activist or only on economic grounds. It must respond to the integral and multidimensional character of the practices of effective appropriation of ecosystems” (p.146). As Escobar argues, effective activism comes from within the complexity of an environmental conflict; it does not streamline or erase the crisscross of stories, epistemologies, ontologies, and reasons for engaging in political action. It does not isolate itself within the confines of its own organizational aims, even if those principles are rooted in anti-oppression work.

I argue that an integrative, cooperative approach to working across multiple environmental groups means working within local contexts, engaging with multiple ways to describe the problem, and maintaining connection to other economic and social conflicts that are connected to environmental concerns. In the Biscuit, activists could have used the post-fire salvage logging as an opportunity to link logger labor conditions and the decline of locally owned mill owners with threats to biodiversity from salvage logging to the governance of public land. Ecological science is a perfectly acceptable means of analyzing and talking about the problem, and is a good reason to encourage individuals to collectively take up political responsibility, but it is not the only one.

Instead, radical environmentalists trapped themselves in a limited language of ecological science, and found their work subsumed by the liberal non-profits.

This research offers a way to look at the trouble radical environmentalists have with articulating their political positions, and some of the possible outcomes from working cooperatively with moderate, liberal environmental organizations. In exploring the manifestations of activism and the relationships within environmentalism, this chapter explores how environmentalism works from inside the movement. This analysis is a jumping off point for considering what the future of environmentalism may look like if patterned power dynamics are not questioned. In this instance, environmental responsibility did not transcend the limitations of liberal politics. While activists recognized that political and economic structures limited the range of solutions available to resolve the logging controversy, they still participated in taking sides, and in exchanging accusations that the opposing actors were politically, not scientifically, informed. Those environmentalists who performed acts of civil disobedience took up the challenge to view responsibility as the ability to respond to their knowledge of environmental degradation, but the actions they took up, and their communication styles, remained hemmed in by the same political systems that they ultimately invoked to settle the controversy.

This line of inquiry speaks beyond the Biscuit and deforestation in general. Other environmental struggles, from resistance to the Keystone XL pipeline, to protesting mountaintop removal coal mining in Appalachia, struggle to move between deeply ethical and individual concern and how to collectively act and articulate a set of demands. Organizations often grow frustrated with each other's respective approaches, while

spaces for collaboration can sometimes put organizations out of sync with their principled mission statements. Others, like land-based laborers and community members living in affected geographies have their own values for the forest, which do not fit neatly into either personal ethics or collective action. This work aims to deconstruct these tensions within a high profile and high impact (politically and ecologically) environmental conflict, and to draw attention to the way ethics and politics were encountered within the controversy, and in context of the temporal urgency that almost always accompanies environmental problems.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **How the Story Ends**

The Biscuit fire was finally extinguished in September of 2002. Late summer rains put out the last of the flames (Biscuit Chronology 2002). In July of 2006, Mike's Gulch was the first of the sales in inventoried roadless land to be logged. The Blackberry salvage sale opened up logging on land previously protected as wilderness. In the radio documentary "Sculpted by Fire" (2006), Rolf Skar of the Siskiyou Project, a group that fought the salvage logging sales, had this to say about the Blackberry sale:

This was sort of a legendary grove of trees for the timber sale planners. They knew that this was huge old growth with tight straight grain and as a matter of fact right before the snows came we uncovered a bunch of green tree logging that was happening on roads outside of logging units where live green old growth trees were just being logged apparently under the cover of road safety, which is strange because large green old growth generally don't fall over onto roads ("Sculpted by Fire" radio transcripts, Bernstein 2006).

As many activists pointed out over the course of fighting the sales, salvage logging was used as an excuse to access big, old growth trees that were previously protected as roadless inventoried or wilderness land. While salvage logging enjoyed protection as a forest health prescription under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, many others knew differently. Even though the sales did not include all of the burn areas, the timber companies did, according to forest ecologist Jerry Franklin, salvage the areas that had the potential to become important late successional forests ("Sculpted by Fire" radio transcripts, Bernstein, 2006).

In this excerpt from “Sculpted by Fire,” Skar expressed the great frustration felt by the environmentalists who watched these forests turn into logging sites:

The bad news of course is that places in the North and South Kalmiopsis that were logged by the Mike’s Gulch and Blackberry logging project are no longer roadless. True, they didn’t build new roads into these areas but when you create clearcuts in what’s essentially de facto wilderness, those areas no longer have what’s called wilderness quality and the inventory...will probably drop several thousand acres of the South Kalmiopsis and the North Kalmiopsis...We just can’t afford to keep losing acres of roadless forest that way. It’s simply not fair to future generations (2006).

What disturbed Skar, and many of the ecologists who cared for the Rogue-Siskiyou, is the future loss of wilderness protection, of potential old growth stands and the complex biodiversity that those bring, and of the opportunity to benefit from these ecosystems. Salvage logging gave priority to short-term profit, without consideration of the long-term benefits to a thriving complex forest. The fight to prevent salvage logging in wilderness areas was a fight over how to prioritize land values, from economic to ecologic to recreational. While the environmentalists ultimately lost their legal and political battles, they left behind a fascinating land use battle by which to analyze how these ethical and political controversies unfold, and can be put to use to consider how environmentalism should develop and adapt to contemporary environmental crises.

### **The Historical Character of the Post-fire Controversy**

The Biscuit fire and subsequent political battle was most active between the years of 2002 and 2007, but the conditions for the fire and for the controversy had been

underway since the first federal forest reserves were set aside in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (“The First Century” 2008). When the federal government took control over managing public forestland, it also took responsibility for balancing competing policy goals, from establishing profitable annual yields to setting aside land for non-economic activity. The Forest Service enjoyed a close relationship with the timber industry, and with the academic institutions that set the forestry research agenda and discourse (Gonzalez 1998).

When Gifford Pinchot established sustainable yield as the guiding concept for land management, he might not have anticipated how subjective the term would become. Conservationists like Frank Church used the legacy of Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt to ground his efforts to rein in the Forest Service (Cheever 1998). However, the AFRC frequently calls for the federal and state governments to increase the annual timber yields to support “sustainable” economic development in local communities (“AFRC news” 2013). In the 1970s, traditional forestry was challenged by ecological forestry, which finally gained enough traction in universities and among environmentalists to become a strong scientific base for challenging logging projects and federal public policy.

At the time of the Biscuit fire in 2002, President Bush announced the Healthy Forests Restoration Initiative, which would become the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (Vaughn & Cortner 2005). While invoking the language of ecological forestry, like forest health and restoration, this act limited access for citizens to land management decisions, and enabled logging sales like the ones questioned in the Rogue-Siskiyou to avoid lengthy NEPA requirements (Vaughn & Cortner 2005). Alongside the history of forest management, the Biscuit was shaped by the history of fire policy and institutional and public attitudes about forest fires. Fires became a public issue after they began to

threaten human settlements and towns (Pyne 2001). After the Big Blowup in 1910 claimed several lives, the Forest Service took an aggressive approach to fire suppression that has persisted in modern public policy. Fire suppression proved to be incredibly disruptive to fire cycles, and created the conditions for severe and out-of-cycle fires. The Biscuit fire in the Rogue-Siskiyou was part of a fire regime that included high intensity fires, but years of mismanagement left substantial woody biomass on the forest floor, which allowed the fire to spread over a greater area at a faster rate than it might have otherwise. As a consequence, the Biscuit fire was one the hottest, and one of the most expensive wildfires on record in the state of Oregon (Biscuit Fire Chronology 2002).

These chapters trace a history of fire and forest management politics and policy that created the background conditions for the Biscuit fire controversy. While I do not argue that there is a linear relationship between these histories and the details of the Biscuit fire, I do argue that in order to provide a deep analysis of this logging battle, the Biscuit needs to be viewed from within its historical context. Scholarship and journalistic coverage of the Biscuit, and of other land use conflicts, typically focus on the details surrounding a particular case, regardless if that example is anomalous, or if it makes sense given the political and economic history in which it occurred. I argue that a political analysis of responsibility and politics in land-use conflicts must be mindful of the way that conflict was historically shaped.

### **The Political Character of the Post-fire Controversy**

This research explores the gap between environmental ethics and environmental politics in the conflict over post-fire salvage logging in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. I have argued that environmental responsibility should be a core concept for

modern environmentalism. Through the idea of environmental responsibility, environmentalism can confront the limitations of a liberal conception of responsibility, and activists can explore innovative ways to address environmental pressures without losing track of other political goals associated with a particular environmental issue. As Arturo Escobar (2008) has pointed out, environmentalism does not always capture the complexity of the issues it confronts.

While environmental groups may self-identify as anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal, the Biscuit case study has shown that they feel as though they must choose their environmental goals over their desires to make systemic change, or even significant policy change at the regional level. Perhaps the kind of criticism that radical groups make of systemic problems, like capitalism, needs sophistication, specificity, and a willingness to resolve these issues through greater inclusivity of perspectives and people in the political process. Individuals living in timber-dependent towns surrounding the fire areas, and Native American tribes who have historically inhabited and cared for the Rogue-Siskiyou, had little space to express their concerns, their needs, and their vision for alternative actions.

There is little doubt that the pressures of a global system of capitalism have provided the foundation for terrible environmental disasters like deforestation. Thinkers from James O'Connor (1997) to Karl Polanyi (2001) have made excellent and well-tested arguments that demonstrate the theoretical and material basis for capitalism is fundamentally at odds with environmental sustainability. When environmentalists in the Biscuit case took up this position, they struggled to connect these big picture concerns with their immediate preoccupation with salvage logging post-burn areas, and their

political energy became trained on the short-term goal to stop the logging operations. One of the organizations, the Oxygen Collective, made a conscious decision to downplay their anti-capitalist ideologies for fear these ideas would have alienated potential allies and future activists from within timber-dependent communities who would agree with their position on the salvage logging sales, but who would presumably disagree with the Oxygen Collective's overarching goal to disrupt the means of production. These activists struggled to reconcile their short-term goals with their long-term goals, and so too with their ecological and political perspectives.

### **Revisiting the Research Questions**

After considering the historical and political dimensions of this conflict, I turn to the research questions I proposed at the beginning of this work. This research posed three primary questions. I will consider each question and how this research addressed each of these concerns.

#### *1.) How does environmental ethics inform political action?*

To address the first question, I used interview data, analyzed campaign material from the involved environmental organizations, and news sources to identify the ethical assumptions from the various actors. I identified which environmental philosophies were represented in these views, and I found that the sentiment of most of the radical activists about the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest had strong affinities with deep ecology and ecocentrism. The activists from the regional non-profit organizations placed greater emphasis on their connection to that particular forest ecology, and on their desire to protect the forest for its recreational value. For all of the activists I interviewed, these

ethical concerns were secondary to the compromise and strategizing that informed their political actions.

As J.B. Callicott argued, environmental ethics is a framework for deciding how to be, and how not to be, in relation to the environment (Callicott 1979). Leopold offered a similarly uncluttered notion of ethics, and that is simply to consider interconnectivity among all things, including humans and non-humans, and to do those things that do not cause harm (Leopold 1986). These relatively simple prescriptions are difficult to actualize. As the overview of ethical positions in Chapter 1 suggests, environmentalists take up the notion of harm and good in different ways. For example, while the Natural Resource Defense Council may encourage industrial-scale solar panel production, BP may claim that natural gas is more ecologically sound than drilling for oil, and Earth First! would likely reject both of these as perpetuating lifestyles and modes of production that are inherently disharmonious with environmental health (“Renewable Energy for America”; “About BP Gas Power and NGL”; “Earth First!”). Determining what is harmful and what is not requires more than an ethical commitment to living gently on the planet, it requires knowledge of planetary and ecosystem science, awareness of the impact on the planet from a global system of capitalism and a global movement of consumer goods and waste, and a respect for different kinds of knowledge and different ways to politically act. The organizations involved in the Biscuit logging protest did, for the most part, have awareness of these various contexts that impacted the immediate concern over logging the forest. They struggled, however, to find political strategies that would work among this multitude of contexts.

Ethics appeared to factor into an individual's understanding of the forest, and why they felt personally motivated to take action to block the salvage logging sales. The activists' dependence on ecological forestry science reflected Leopold's suggestion to recognize interconnectivity and interdependence (Leopold 1986). Ethics played a subtle role in informing the political perspectives and choices of these groups. However, ethics was also considered a political limitation. In my interviews with former Biscuit logging protesters, I asked if they thought their philosophies about the forest (intrinsic value, personal experiences in the wild, etc.) would have been useful politically. Almost all of the interviewees considered their ethical concerns to be too personal, and that these perspectives and experiences would not resonate with the audiences with the power to change the logging sales, namely the court, the Forest Service, and the general public. Instead, political action was informed by what these organizations thought would be the most effective way to immediately stop the logging.

Environmental ethics does inform political action, albeit indirectly. Ethics motivated individuals to identify inappropriate or harmful uses of the environment. In this case, it was not the anti-capitalism of the radical groups that incited them to protest, it was a deeper, basic, "this is wrong" response that agitated them out of their daily lives and into political action. Are environmental ethics required to motivate people to take up environmental responsibility? This is an open question. From this research, looking specifically at this forest conflict, I argue that a sense of right and wrong in the human/nature relationship played an important role in moving people to take up responsibility.

I also argue that many of those who participated in the actions were already inclined to be dubious of the Forest Service and of the timber industry, because both of these actors relied on a different scientific basis for making forestry decisions, and there is a long history of land management decisions favoring private economic interests (see chapters 2, 3 & 4). Even the more mainstream regional forest protection groups were concerned with backdoor arrangements between industry and the Forest Service, so the political battle over the Biscuit was an extension of the normal mistrust among the different political actors. Environmental ethics alone cannot account for the reason why individuals chose to act to stop logging in the Rogue-Siskiyou. The specific ecological conditions, the political and economic history of this forest, and the existing power relationships among the direct stakeholders played a powerful role in encouraging people to take up political action.

While individuals and groups may have identified salvage logging as an ethical breach of the human/nature relationship, this cannot solely account for the ensuing legislative and political battles. These findings support my argument that ethics does not necessarily have to be driver of environmentalism, and the environmental movement would do well to ask what constitutes environmental responsibility, and how does environmentalism become a political imperative, rather than a special interest of “treehuggers” and hiking enthusiasts, as environmentalism is popularly perceived.

## *2.) What does political responsibility look like in the environmental movement?*

This question was addressed by examining the political strategies used by the environmental groups, particularly the direct action organizations. The mainstream environmental movement typically encourages green consumption to be an individual's

act of environmental responsibility. This falls short of critically engaging economic, social, and political structures that enable environmental destruction as part of the regular activity of an industrial democracy. Recycling, buying energy efficient appliances, and taking vacations to “green” resorts in tropical places are ways in which people politically disengage, and limit their view of responsibility, and of impact, to their individual ledger of right and wrong things. Mainstream environmental organizations do successfully lobby for policy change, and their public awareness campaigns have contributed to turning hydrofracking and the Keystone XL pipeline into well-publicized causes. However, these approaches have yet to radically destabilize existing means of production and consumption, nor do they change the discourse of environmentalism from resource management to care or responsibility.

Although these major non-profit organizations were not the focus of my research, the tactics and their frameworks for thinking through environmental issues was evident in the political approaches taken by the regional non-profit organizations in my case study. These groups convened guided hikes and ecological learning opportunities to teach the general public why the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest was worth protecting, and why it should not be aggressively logged; they filed lawsuits against the Forest Service and the BLM to stop salvage logging sales, and to draw attention to breeches in NEPA protocol by the Forest Service; and while interviewees supported direct action protests, their organizations would not agree to participate as well. All of these approaches remain close to the template of the major mainstream environmental organizations. While not ineffective, they do not offer a provocative or updated version of environmental

responsibility, and the notion itself remains limited by a liberal conception of responsibility (Lavin 2008).

Radical environmental groups defined themselves in contrast to these “namby-pamby” organizations that, in their estimation, would not take great enough risks to protect the environment. These groups, from EF! to Cascadia Forest Defense, used their bodies as a barrier between logging and the forest. This is a powerful form of resistance. There is no greater sacrifice than the self, and no greater challenge to the timber companies than to offer the choice to back down or to kill or maim another human being in the name of profit. However, this, along with tree sits, bridge blockades, and marches, are temporary interferences. Because of the urgency associated with issues like deforestation, there is little time to meaningfully incorporate other elements of their organizational goals, like challenging capitalism and patriarchy. Indeed, these secondary goals can discourage others, especially people from timber-dependent communities, from participating. The direct action groups I interviewed found that community members were more willing to join their road blockades if the message was limited to ending ecologically reckless logging, without these bigger political challenges to whole systems (Interview data, subject 5, 2012).

Radical groups might consider their political goals are too revolutionary for everyday resistance movements. Perhaps their political goals are not critical enough. While all of the groups I spoke with were avowedly anti-capitalist, they all benefited significantly from the fruits of an industrial democracy. The technologies they use, and can afford to procure, like backpacks, backcountry cookware and supplies, a greyhound bus and their preference for biofuel, among other technological attributes, made possible

the kind of civil disobedience and political acts that they performed. Perhaps environmental responsibility does not require taking up arms, philosophically or literally, against the state, or private interests. The task of environmental responsibility is to confront the challenge of how to make environmental conflicts political, and not just ecological, personal, or limited by a liberal individualism. This research presents a provocative question to environmentalism, and one that I intend to explore in future research projects.

*3.) What are the contributions of this work to evaluating ethics and responsibility in the environment movement and in natural resource conflict management?*

This research took elements of the scholarship on environmentalism – political strategy and ethical philosophy – and evaluated them together in the circumstances of a well-known land-use conflict. Environmental philosophy and environmental politics do not often receive consideration in the same research project. In so doing, I evaluate how the gap between ethics and political responsibility is navigated when both are confronted with a real, pressing environmental issue. The Biscuit post-fire salvage logging case was of particular interest because it remains one of the most hotly contested logging disputes in the Pacific Northwest. The variety of environmental responses to the logging controversy allowed for deep analysis of different political strategies and approaches within the environmental movement, and the political and economic conditions provided a rich backdrop to a crisis that was politically and ecologically in the making for decades.

Theorizing about environmentalism contributes to thinking about environmental responsibility, but the urgency of climate change and the myriad planetary changes that are already dramatically changing geography, economy, and livability for millions of

people around the world requires scholarship that holds theory accountable to practice.

What I found is that while ethics can help explain how individuals arrive at determining environmental rights and wrongs, and environmental philosophy has some influence on the conceptual framework of political action, ethics does not speak directly to politics.

Environmental politics has several aims: The movement hopes to find popular support; to find success overhauling public policy; to effectively change production and consumption practices and habits; and to account for social and economic injustices as they are experienced by those affected by a particular environmental issue. Research and scholarship will need to direct attention towards political economy, it will need to give consideration to what constitutes a post-liberal environmental responsibility, and it will have to reconcile how these new directions and strategies can be immediately applied to on-the-ground environmental conflicts. This research is an entry point to that very challenge, and I will consider how public policy might reflect some of the goals of environmentalism.

### **Practical Considerations for Environmental Responsibility and Forest Management**

Near the core of the fire debate is the problem of treating fire as a natural condition, and as a threat to human communities and to forest health. If forests, and even fires, are considered natural, then under what conditions are they determined to be unnaturally large, hot, and dangerous? Scientists with an ecological forestry perspective have several alternative visions of fire management. Stephen Pyne (2001) imagined a new paradigm unbound by the duality of forestry as wrong, and ecology as right. Instead, fire needs to be considered as a biological theory to be more fully understood and more

fully controllable. By understanding the biological relationships of forests and fire, land managers can better manipulate the conditions that create small and large fires, and where, so humans can use fire to their advantage (controlled burn to shape healthy forests) and to create safer zones for human habitation. He termed this “bio-engineering,” although instead of invoking genetically modified organisms in forests (although he doesn’t discount the possibility), he imagined a kind of “fire gardening” approach to manipulating fire through land management. Pyne’s call to replace a dualistic approach (ecology versus economy) with a fundamentally different way to experience fire altogether is one way to consider the possibilities of environmental responsibility. Although deliberative democracy has the potential to lead communities to make decisions that might not be favorable to ecological conditions, the plurality of voices across a less hierarchically structured decision-making environment.

Ultimately, Pyne made an argument for managing fire as a critical component to environmental stewardship. Since humans are the only species capable of creating and deliberately managing fire, we have a special responsibility towards fire and land. He believed the Forest Service should no longer sit as the sole authority in fire decisions. He is not alone in questioning the utility of the Forest Service (O’Toole 1988; Pyne 2001). As an alternative to the Forest Service’s unilateral decision-making power, Pyne (2001) suggested:

No longer can one single entity control the agenda concerning the public domain.

No one group can define itself as the fire community; fire-affected communities need not be solely those that live adjacent to the public lands and their free-burning flames. They may be interest groups, volunteers, seasonal residents,

recreational birders, scientists. The problem is not that the Forest Service, or some successor federal agency, may rule this community, but that none do – that a working consensus becomes impossible (p.177).

Pyne imagined a deliberative democratic approach to decision-making, along the lines of Frank Fischer (2000), Martin Hager (1997), and Hendrik Wagaaner (Hager & Wagaaner 2003). Deliberative democracy involves relaxing hierarchical chains of command in favor of multiple stakeholders conducting their own analyses with their local epistemological frames, and deliberating amongst each other how to prioritize needs, which techniques are most appropriate, and how to divide responsibility. Fire management requires this context-based, shared management approach because fire cycles differ among forests and grasslands, different ecosystems have different biological needs and characteristics, and human needs, from safe homes to logging profits, likewise differs from region to region. Importantly, Pyne considered fires an independent actor, a force that humans need to learn to live with, rather than fight against.

Frank Fischer takes up this line of inquiry in *Reframing Public Policy* (2003), and he wondered how science might be democratized in the policy making process. Indeed, the tension between science and political activism ran through the post-fire logging resistance. In this case study, however, it was the use of science, rather than the access to science, that limited the range of political responses to the logging sales. If people are meant to take up greater environmental responsibility, then public policy needs to take place outside of these strict limitations of participation. Communities impacted by logging decisions need to have access to the same research considered by decision-making bodies, like the Forest Service, and local epistemologies and knowledge needs to

have a stronger role in shaping the options available for a particular area of land. Environmental responsibility cannot solely be up to the individual; if there is insufficient space for acting on a policy issue, then individuals cannot fully engage, or have a meaningful impact. Out of this frustration, individuals coalesced into a range of environmental (and in some cases, logging-friendly) organizations, each trying to make an impression on the decision-making process outside of the framework for participation given to them by the Forest Service. These land-use conflicts could be diffused before they emerge if the decision-making process would take on the characteristics of deliberative democracy.

### **Next Steps for Future Research**

This research lends itself to further inquiry in public policy. As I argued in Chapter 3, fire management policy is a muddled mix of aggressive containment, prescribed burns, and politically motivated management not fitted for specific ecological conditions. The Native American land management that pre-dated early European settlement might still hold some wisdom for living with fire. While this study provides the historical basis for analyzing fire and public policy, a framework of environmental responsibility could add a new dimension to policy analysis and recommendations, one that accounts for a wider range of participatory models, and a change in paradigm about the way the public and the land management agencies think about their relationships to fire.

Beyond policy work, this is a starting point to explore the theoretical and practical implications of the concept of environmental responsibility. Here, I have offered environmental responsibility as a promising new framework by which to explore the

future of environmentalism, but I have not yet interrogated the concept to see what that framework might look like, and what kind of politics it might produce in response to an environmental crisis. The concept could be used to look at the idea of an environmental crisis, and how citizens and activists can overcome addressing environmentalism on a case-by-case basis.

As I have argued, the political and economic theories that help to explain the structural conditions that create environmental pressures must be evaluated on-the-ground, as environmental issues unfold, in order to experience the relevancy of these theories. Instead of taking an historical approach to reconstructing a land-use conflict through political theory, I will address a contemporary environmental conflict. In so doing, I hope to continue to apply pressure to the space between theory and materiality, so they help explain each other, and so political strategies to address environmental conflicts can be developed with deep awareness of the biophysical, economic, political, and social implications. This research critiques the existing mechanisms of public participation, and asks how can those mechanisms account for power imbalances among the direct stakeholders in an environmental conflict. Applying these questions to land-use dispute like mining the Alberta tar sands and building the Keystone XL pipeline can not only add depth to the conversation among environmentalists, private industry, and state actors, but it can help citizens and activists to develop political tools and strategies to address the breadth and depth of this issue.

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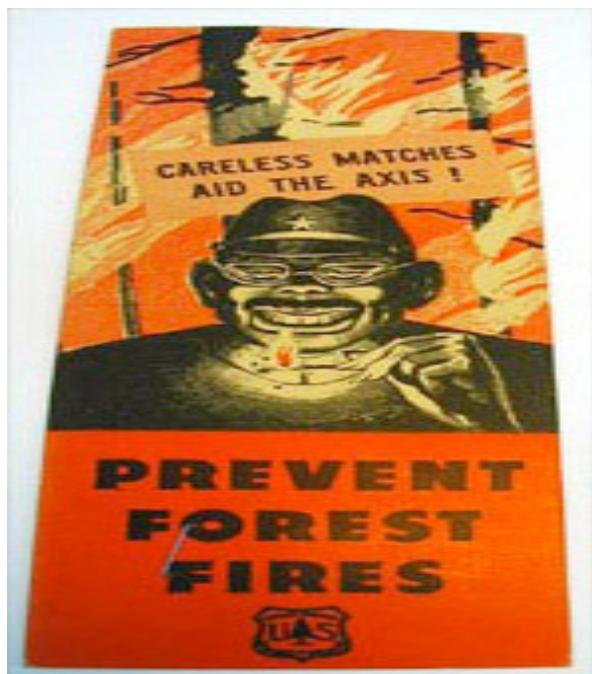
## **Appendix A**

### **US Forest Service Ad Campaigns**

**Forest Service Campaigns, Poster 1**  
("Smokey the Bear," used with fair use)



**Forest Service Campaigns, Poster 2**  
("Smokey the Bear," used with fair use)



## **Appendix B**

### **Campaign Fliers from Environmental Groups**

# FORESTS NEED FIRE!

## *National Day of Action*

**April 19** at a Forest Service office near you!



*National Day of Action to Protect the Biscuit  
April 19*

Join us to advocate for the creation of the Biscuit fire natural recovery area and to raise awareness of the importance of protecting post-fire landscapes nationwide. The Bush Administration is trying to log our last native forests under the guise of post-fire salvage logging. [www.o2collective.org](http://www.o2collective.org) 541.660.3664

**D**on't let this happen to your forests...

**S**tand up for fire affected forests before its too late!

Oxygen

## Oxygen Collective, Flier 2, used under fair use

### **SAVE THE WILD SISKIYOU!**



Come to the Wild Siskiyou to join a growing movement working to halt logging in the Biscuit Burn area. This campaign embraces people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives interested in creative action against this egregious logging plan.

Together we can share skills and build a community while engaging in a variety of tactics, ranging from outreach and letter writing to direct action.

Oxygen Collective  
[oxygen@o2collective.org](mailto:oxygen@o2collective.org)  
541.660.3664

Wild Siskiyou Action  
[siskiyou@cascadiarising.org](mailto:siskiyou@cascadiarising.org)  
541.659.2682

#### **ONGOING AND UPCOMING EVENTS:**

##### **Wild Siskiyou Action Camp and Skillshare April 1-8**

Free! We will offer climbing trainings, non-violence and direct action workshops, anti-oppression trainings, skillshares on fire ecology, letter writing, natural history, graphic design, radio communications, media, banner-making and more.. Wild Siskiyou Action 541.659.2682.

##### **FORESTS NEED FIRE!**

##### **National Day of Action to Protect the Biscuit! April 19**

Contact the Oxygen Collective at 541.660.3664 or write [oxygen@o2collective.org](mailto:oxygen@o2collective.org) to organize an event in your area.

Upcoming events include a Walk for the Wild Siskiyou, a Gigantic Demonstration in the Woods and local film screenings to benefit the Biscuit Legal Fund.

#### **Directions:**

TRAVEL SOUTHWEST ON 199 FROM GRANTS PASS.  
IN SELMA TURN RIGHT AT BLINKING YELLOW LIGHT  
(AT GAS STATION) ONTO ILLINOIS RIVER ROAD.  
CONTINUE UP ILLINOIS RIVER ROAD FOR SIX MILES.  
LOOK FOR OUR CAMP AT THE SIX MILE CAMPGROUND.  
PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY ON THIS WELL-TRAVELED  
FOREST SERVICE ROAD.

For information about Biscuit logging and the growing resistance, visit the following websites.

[WWW.O2COLLECTIVE.ORG](http://WWW.O2COLLECTIVE.ORG)  
[WWW.CASCADIARISING.ORG](http://WWW.CASCADIARISING.ORG)  
[WWW.ROGUEIMC.ORG](http://WWW.ROGUEIMC.ORG)

## Cascadia Rising, Flier 3, p.1

**Senator Gordon Smith** is Oregon's Republican Party Senator, and has aggressively championed Biscuit logging, even proposing a law that would eliminate all legal challenges to the Biscuit. Smith has offices throughout Oregon in Portland, Pendleton, Eugene, Medford, and Bend, as well as in Washington, DC. See <http://gsmith.senate.gov/> for full details.

Portland: (503)326-3386 / DC: (202)224-3753

**US Federal District Court Judge Michael Hogan** is the judge that all legal challenges to the logging in the Biscuit have gone through, before inevitably being appealed to the 9th Circuit Court. Hogan is a right-wing Republican appointee that has not only rejected nearly every environmental case ever brought to him, but has done so in a manner that has stalled the proceedings as long as possible, often while logging was underway on-the-ground. Hogan's court is in Eugene, OR

**Pam Bode** is the District Ranger ("the boss") of the Galice District as well as the Illinois Valley District of the Siskiyou National Forest. The latter is the district in which the Fiddler timber sale is located. In many ways, she's the public face of 2/3 of the Siskiyou National Forest. She's under Scott Conroy, who is himself under Linda Goodman, who is herself under Mark Rey (see previous pages).

Pam has apparently been remarkably friendly to protesters in person, bringing them cookies, and is even rumored to have bought a t-shirt at a eco-organized fundraiser! However she has been harsh in interviews with the corporate media, often contradicting her in-person remarks in a rather shocking manner. She lives near the Fiddler timber sale, and is an underling with no real power, not a major political player.

Pam Bode || 200 NE Greenfield Rd || PO Box 440 || Grants Pass OR 97528  
(541) 412-6000

**Other District Rangers:** John Borton (Chetco District) (541) 412-6000 ☎ John Borton (Gold Beach District) (541) 247-3600 ☎ Carl Linderman (Powers District) (541) 439-6200

### WHO MIGHT STOP THE LOGGING -- YOU!! PLEASE CONTACT THE GROUPS LISTED TO HELP!

**Governor Ted Kulongoski** has stated he opposes logging in roadless areas of the Biscuit. With Bush's recent proposal to require that state's Governors "request" that logging of such areas be banned before the federal government prevents such logging, Kulongoski may have the power to prevent all of the proposed roadless area logging in the Biscuit, which could begin as soon as summer 2005.

Ted Kulongoski || 254 State Capitol || Salem OR, 97310 ☎ (503) 378-4582.

**Senator Ron Wyden** is Oregon's Democratic Party Senator, and has done little or nothing to oppose the Biscuit timber sale, despite significant pressure. Wyden has offices though out Oregon in Portland, Eugene, La Grande, Medford, Bend, and Salem, as well as in Washington, DC. See <http://wyden.senate.gov/> for full details.

Portland: (503) 326-7525 / DC: (202) 224-5244

**Congressman Peter DeFazio** is a Democrat who represents the area around the Fiddler timber sale. He hasn't yet made the logging a significant issue.

Oregon: 1-800-944-9603 / DC: (202) 225-6416

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PUBLISHED BY CASCADIA RISING! ECODEFENSE!! CONTACT US FOR INFO ON EVERYTHING!!  
[www.cascadiarising.org](http://www.cascadiarising.org) || [action@cascadiarising.org](mailto:action@cascadiarising.org) || 503.493.7495

## Understanding the Crisis in the Biscuit A Guide to Who's Who and What's What



*Set by a strike of lightning, the Biscuit fire occurred during the 2002 fire season and stretched across the heart of the Siskiyou Wild Rivers area, burning around 500,000 acres. This was the largest fire in North America that year. Forest Service scientists quickly pointed out that Biscuit burned in a mosaic and performed needed biological functions including reduction of fuels.*

*Within months the Bush administration, led by Mark Rey, began planning the largest logging project in Forest Service history. The Biscuit logging plan (deceptively titled the Biscuit Fire Recovery Project by the government) encompasses about 20,000 acres (31.25 sq miles) and a proposed cut of 372 million board feet - this is equivalent to 74,400 logging trucks. This includes about 9,000 acres (14 sq miles) of "protected" old-growth reserves. The Biscuit logging project is the first to threaten roadless areas since the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was created and would cause about 48,000 acres (75 sq miles) of roadless areas to be ineligible for future wilderness designation due to road fragmentation. The logging plan for the area would leave just 1.5 legacy trees ("snags") per acre - a virtual clearcut.*

### THE BASICS

**Salvage Logging** is based on the idea that burned trees are wasted if not logged. The timber industry likes to promote the idea that logging “fixes” a forest: if a forest has burned, logging will help it re-grow; if a forest is at risk of burning, logging will help prevent it. The truth is that forests have repeatedly burned and regrown in these mountains for millennia, and the burned trees – and all dead trees – perform significant roles in any healthy forest. Commercial logging magnifies fire-risk by removing larger, fire-resistant trees, increasing fire ignition sources, leaving behind flammable slash, and cultivating hotter, drier, stands of smaller trees.

**Legacy Trees** are standing dead trees (a.k.a. snags), and play a critical role in ecosystems. The entire life cycle of a tree is measured in terms of its years as a live standing tree, as a legacy tree, and as a fallen tree. Why are “dead” trees so important to life? They:

- Return biomass to the land.
- Store and slowly release nutrients to the recovering forest.
- Retain moisture throughout the dry season.
- Provide shade and favorable sites for the germination and early growth of seedlings.
- Stabilize soil.
- Provide unique habitats for a great variety of creatures on land and in rivers.
- Stabilize stream banks, and promote quality salmon and aquatic habitat.



**Non-violent direct actions** are tactics used to express public discontent with the way representatives and the powers that be. Direct actions ignore unjust laws, directly stopping a destructive practice or building something positive. In the Biscuit, forest defenders are using a variety of direct action tactics to halt and stall logging:



- Soft-blockades: People sitting or standing on logging roads, often linking arms, and refusing to move.
- Lockdowns: People locked to each other, to a vehicle, or other heavy object, with the use of a variety of locking devices.
- Bipods and tripods: free standing structures or platforms supported by poles and/or ropes and occupied by a person to blockade a road or bridge. The idea is that the person must be killed or removed passing a blockades site.

### LEGAL / SCIENCE TERMS

**A Closure** is an area where the Forest Service denies public access to land that would otherwise be accessible to expedite logging, prevent protests, and restrict monitoring of logging activities. Fiddler Mountain has a 14 mile road closure. Closures of this sort have in the past been found to be unconstitutional restriction of 1st Amendment rights.

The Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) was adopted in 1994, during the Clinton administration. It is a design for ecosystem management and rural community economic assistance for federal forests in western Oregon, Washington, and northern California. Since the Bush administration has come into power the NFP has been hacked

Scott Conroy is the Forest Supervisor (“the boss”) of the Siskiyou National Forest, and the primary government spokesperson advocating for logging in the Biscuit. Despite being an un-elected public official that one would hope would be committed to neutrality (or at least cordiality) in managing public lands he’s demonstrated a firm commitment to the right-wing, publicly demonizing environmental activists of all stripes as part of the “Conflict Industry”. Despite opposition to the Biscuit logging plan by leading scientists (e.g. Jerry Franklin, Robert L. Beschta, etc.), former Forest Supervisors, and from 95% of the tens of thousands of public comments on the Biscuit, Conroy claims there is no scientific or broad based public opposition to logging in the Biscuit. Scott hopes that if you tell a lie enough times to the media, people will start to believe it.



Scott Conroy || 333 W. 8th St. || Medford, Oregon 97501 ☎ 541-858-2200

**Silver Creek Timber Company** has bought more acres of the Biscuit than any other company. The company is headed by John West, a right-wing anti-environmentalist that clearly enjoys the media spotlight and chiding protesters. Unlike the other companies involved in destroying the Biscuit, Silver Creek Timber didn’t exist until the summer of 2003, after the Biscuit fire. Given the multi-million dollar costs associated with conducting timber operations, it’s generally presumed this “locally owned and operated” company is being bankrolled by big timber, most likely Colombia Helicopters, Roseburg Forest Products, and Rough and Ready Lumber. Loggers for Silver Creek appear to have been exclusively contracted employees from Colombia Helicopters and much of the wood cut by the company goes to Roseburg Forest Products. Silver Creek itself has only 2 employees, a tiny office, and has no mill. Silver Creek was busted for illegal logging in a Wilderness area last year.

Silver Creek is based in Merlin, OR. John West lives in Glendale, OR

**Roseburg Forest Products (RFP)** is regional timber giant, with nearly \$1 billion in sales annually, thousands of employees, and nearly 1500 square miles of Oregon’s forest land under its control. RFP President Allyn Ford is a major political player, personally donating over \$60,000 to Republicans over the past 4 years. Ford is also the President of the Board of Directors of Umpqua Bank, a bank that is all but completely owned and operated by the timber industry. Umpqua Bank has hundreds of locations around the west coast, and has its corporate HQ in Portland (200 SW Market St., Ste. 1900.) RFP itself is based in Roseburg, OR. See [www.rfpcorp.com](http://www.rfpcorp.com) for more info.



**Columbia Helicopters** is one of largest helicopter logging companies in the world, with more than \$100 million in sales in many countries. Loggers contracted to Columbia have been doing much of cutting gin the Biscuit, and Columbia’s helicopters will be doing most, if not all, of the helicopter log-hauling operations. The company and its president, Lemetta Wes is another political powerhouse, with over \$50,000 in personal political contributions to Republican candidates over the past few years. Columbia Helicopters is based at the Airport in Aurora, Oregon halfway between Portland and Salem, OR. See [www.colhel.com](http://www.colhel.com) for more info.

South Coast Lumber Co. (aka CLR Timber Holdings), East Fork Timber, Swanson Group and Greg Liles are some of the **other timber companies** that also hold logging rights in the Biscuit. South Coast / CLR ([socomi.com](http://socomi.com)) and Swanson Group ([swansongroupinc.com](http://swansongroupinc.com)) are both large companies with tens, or perhaps hundreds, of millions in assets.

## Cascadia Rising, Flier 3, p.3

from Portland, and is generally a great source for information on all sorts of stuff about forest activism, as we keep in touch with activists from N. California through British Columbia. CR made this pamphlet! We're also working on the National Earth First! Rendezvous, which is this July 4-11 on Mt. Hood (see [www.earthfirst2005.org](http://www.earthfirst2005.org)). Cascadia RISING! is not to be confused with our friends at the Cascadia Rising Infoshop on SE Clinton Street (see <http://www.geocities.com/crimfisshop/>)

CR || PO Box 12583 || Portland, OR 97212 || 503.493.7495  
action@cascadiarising.org || [www.cascadiarising.org](http://www.cascadiarising.org)

**Civil Liberties Defense Center (CLDC)** is the Eugene, OR legal clinic defending many of the arrestees charged during civil disobedience actions at the Biscuit. This is the place to send money for legal support, however donations for bail must be sent Biscuit Legal Fund, listed above.

CLDC || 259 East 5th Ave., Suite 300 || Eugene, OR 97401 || cldc@efn.org

**Joan Norman** is a 74-year-old activist arrested twice at the Biscuit timber sale for blocking the public road leading into the Fiddler timber sale. Joan is refusing bail and has been in the "pokey" longer than anyone else arrested in the Biscuit. Read an interview with her here: <http://portland.indymedia.org/en/2005/03/313319.shtml>. You can write her too!

Joan Norman || c/o Josephine County Adult Jail || 1901 NE F St. || Grants Pass, OR 97526

**The Cascadia Wildlands Project (CWP)** is based in Eugene, OR. While not primarily focused on the Biscuit, CWP has been big supporters of through efforts to organize protest rallies, carpools, letter writing campaigns, a participation in lawsuits, etc. CWP works to protect the forests, waters and wildlife of Cascadia by monitoring environmentally destructive projects and educating, organizing and agitating.

CWP || Po Box 10455 || Eugene, OR 97440 || 541.434.1463 || [info@cascwild.org](mailto:info@cascwild.org) || [www.cascwild.org](http://www.cascwild.org)

### WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION

**Mary Rey** is Bush's Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, and before obtaining this position was the one of the leading, if not *the* leading timber industry lobbyist in the country. He is responsible for the management of 155 national forests, 19 national grasslands, and 15 land utilization projects on 192,000,000 acres of publicly owned lands in 44 states. Make no mistake: This fox is not guarding the hen house - this fox is IN the hen house. Rey, more than any other individual, has brought about the insanity of the Biscuit logging plan. Not that there's any point in trying to change his mind, but he's [Mark.Rey@usda.gov](mailto:Mark.Rey@usda.gov) / 202-720-7173.



**Linda Goodman** is the Regional Forester ("the boss") of all of Oregon and Washington's public National Forest lands. Goodman is a Bush appointee, and not particularly sympathetic to pressure from environmentalists. Linda's Goodman's office is in downtown Portland, on SW 2nd Street, between Oak and Stark.

Linda Goodman || Regional Forester, Pacific Northwest Region 6 || P.O. Box 3623 || Portland, OR 97208  
(503) 808-2200 || [ldgoodman@fs.fed.us](mailto:ldgoodman@fs.fed.us)

down to size, with corporate timber interests getting a huge wish list of requests met. Protections for rare species, salmon, forested waterway, fire-prone areas, old-growth forests, and roadless forests areas created by the NFF and other regulations have suffered, as downgrades of the laws allowing for public participation in forest management.

Forest land designations, set up by the NFF and other Forest Service protocols:

**Matrix areas** -- timberlands set-aside under the Northwest Forest Plan expressly for timber production. This is the sacrifice zone, and includes a huge amount of old-growth forests.

Matrix Sales in the Biscuit: Horse - cut 2004 by Silver Creek Logging; Indi - cut 2004 by East Fork; Flat Top - cut 2004/2005 by Silver Creek Logging; Briggs cedar - cut 2005.

**Late Successional Reserve (LSR)** -- land set aside within the Northwest forest plan to be habitat for plants and animals that require old growth to survive such as the northern spotted owl, which despite these meager protections, is still experiencing rapid population decline. The proposed biscuit salvage plan would decimate around 9,000 acres of "old-growth reserves" much of which is still green trees. This massive attack on LSRs is likely to influence forest policy regarding old-growth reserves throughout the entire Northwest.

LSR Sales in the Biscuit: Fiddler - in the process of being cut by Silver Creek; Berry - purchased by CLR; Chetco - purchased by CLR; Hobson - purchased by Greg Liles; Lazy - purchased by Greg Liles; Steed - purchased by CLR; Wafer - purchased by CLR.

**Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA)** -- land protected by the Roadless Rule during final months of the Clinton administration, to stay wild and untouched. Since Bush took office, timber companies have been given the power to begin dismantling the only policy providing protection for the little roadless areas we have left. The Wild Siskiyou region has the largest concentration of intact, roadless forests and watersheds on the Pacific Coast outside of Alaska. About 13 square miles of IRA are proposed to be cutting the biscuit timber sale, which could set a precedent of dismantling roadless area regulations in forests across the nation.

IRA Sales in the Biscuit: Mike's Gulch - the first IRA sale is scheduled to be auctioned in a couple weeks!

**Roadsides** -- Roadsides are becoming a free-for-all for logging in recent years throughout the National Forest system. **Roadside Salvage** are trees on the side of roads the Forest Service has declared to be a "potential threat" to public safety because of their chance of falling onto the road. They then have the opportunity to "salvage" log them to keep timber interests happy while still keeping the public "safe".

**Port-Orford-cedar Root Rot** is a disease that are spread to the Port-Orford-cedar through infected soil and water transfer, with logging equipment a well-documented and primary cause. This non-native disease is lethal to the rare Port-Orford and affects its roots, rapidly killing the tree. Logging would occur in 21 drainages in four Roadless Areas that are currently uninhabited with the *Phytophthora lateralis* (*P. lateralis*). This could transfer this easily spread disease throughout this roadless region and threaten the vitality of these unique trees.

### THE LAWSUITS

**Federal District Court** -- the first level of courts that legal challenges to logging on National Forests go to. See Judge Michael Hogan in "Who's Who" for more information.

## Cascadia Rising, Flier 3, p.4

**The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals** is this court is a panel of judges and is the highest underneath the Supreme Court in our regions judicial system. Cases appealed from Federal District Courts go here. The 9th Circuit is based in San Francisco.

**A Temporary Restraining Order (TRO)** is a short and temporary halt on a given activity until a court can make further rulings on its legality.

**A Preliminary Injunction (PI)** lasts longer than a TRO, and requires the judge to evaluate the merits of the case more carefully. The fundamental question in both a TRO and a PI is the same: "will irreparable harm be done to the in the interim before the trial can even be determined". If the answer is determined to be "yes" than they can be granted.

**Lawsuit #1** involves the Siskiyou Project, KS Wild, American Lands, Sierra Club and the Oregon Natural Resources Council, The Wilderness Society, Defenders of Wildlife, and Pacific Rivers Council. Earthjustice and The Western Environmental Law Center are the legal firms representing. This lawsuit, amongst many issues, is based upon violations of the NFP and Roadless Rule inherent in the logging plans. This lawsuit only applies to LSR and IRA portions of the Biscuit, and disregards the Matrix areas. Although the 9th Circuit had placed an injunction on logging in these areas in Summer 2004, it was lifted in January with virtually no explanation by a group of right-wing underling judges.

Most recent updates (Late March 2005): the District Court was to begin arguments in the case on March 22, 2005, but has asked for more information from the attorneys, delaying the beginnings of proceedings until at least April 8th.

**Lawsuit #2** involves the Cascadia Wildland Project, National Forest Protection Alliance, Native Forest Network, and Klamath Forest Alliance. This lawsuit, amongst many issues, is based upon broken logging protocols in regards to the Port-Orford Root Rot fungus. It was filed much more recently, and affects all areas with the Biscuit, including the Matrix.

Most recent updates (Late March 2005): an application for a TRO by the plaintiffs was denied. Now lawyers are seeking a PI. The trial itself is not set to begin for a while.

There is also another, more minor environmentalist lawsuit, as well as a timber industry lawsuit demanding more logging that is stumbling around.

### WHO'S DEFENDING THE BISCUIT?



**Wild Siskiyou Action** has been the group maintaining the recent basecamps around the Fiddler timber sale and organizing the civil disobedience actions. These are the folks to call if you want to go down to the Biscuit and see or take part in the action first hand. Wild Siskiyou Action was started in the Summer of 2004, setting up the initial road blockade at the Inde timber sale.

Wild Siskiyou Action | siskiyou@cascadiarising.org | 541.659.2682

**Kalmiopsis Earth First!**, named after the Kalmiopsis wilderness area which is surrounded by the Biscuit timber sale, has long been active in supporting non-violent civil disobedience to protect the Siskiyou National Forest. If you are interested in donating to the various direct action efforts in the Siskiyous you should write

your checks to them:

Kalmiopsis Earth First! | PO Box 185 | Cave Junction, OR 97523

**Biscuit Legal Fund** is the jail support team for people arrested in the Biscuit. Make donations for bail and jail support to:

Biscuit Legal Fund | c/o Rogue Federal Credit Union | 415 Lithia Way | Ashland, OR 97520

**The Oxygen Collective**, based in Ashland, OR, practices creative resistance through projects that address injustice in our communities and destruction in the natural world. They use a 40' biodiesel tour bus to create and enhance events, and then add live music, independent media, organic food, and large-scale, participative art projects. The Oxygen Collective has played a pivotal role in educating the public about the Biscuit logging project and resistance to it. Along with the Siskiyou Project, the O2 Collective's website has more information on the Biscuit than most anywhere else.

O2 Collective | P.O. Box 533 | Ashland, OR 97520 | www.o2collective.org | oxygen@o2collective.org



**The Siskiyou Regional Education Project** combines science, education and advocacy and has been working to protect biodiversity in the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion of southwest Oregon and northwest California and has been around since 1983. They also help run the Siskiyou Field Institute, an ecological field studies program.

The Siskiyou project has taken a rather conservative approach to defending the Biscuit, not mounting a strong challenge to the "matrix" and road side "hazard" logging components of the Biscuit, and focusing on the Late Successional Reserves and Roadless Area logging. The Siskiyou project has played a huge part in making the Biscuit logging project a national political issue.

The Siskiyou Project | 9335 Takilma Road | Cave Junction, OR 97523 | 541-592-4459 | Portland Office: 503-222-6101 | Ashland Office: 541-482-1417 | project@siskiyou.org | www.siskiyou.org

**The Biscuit Alliance** is comprised of members of the Illinois Valley community that lives around the Fiddler timber sale and other nearby logging projects. Based in Selma, OR. The Biscuit Alliance does grassroots community organizing in opposition to the Biscuit logging project, and has done extraordinary work transforming this rural community into a hotbed of resistance!

The Biscuit Alliance | 541-592-9810 | http://user.cavnet.com/guenterbiscuit/main.html

**Kalmath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center** is focused on everything in the Siskiyou and Klamath National Forests besides the Biscuit – there are many other ecologically destructive projects, logging and otherwise in the area in addition to the Biscuit – although they do education on the Biscuit issue as well. Generally speaking KS Wild is focused on education and legal challenges to logging projects.

KS Wild | PO Box 102 | Ashland, OR 97520 | 541-488-5789 | lesley@kswild.org | www.kswild.org

**Cascadia RISING! EcoDefense** promotes networking amongst radical eco-activists around Cascadia, produces and distros outreach and educational resources, organizes educational events, coordinate carpools to the Biscuit

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Questions**

## **Interview Questions**

1. Which organization or organizations were you a member of or employed by during the time of the post-fire salvage logging controversy in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest?
2. What was your job or volunteer title? What were your organizational responsibilities and duties? Was this a volunteer or paid position?
3. Beyond the merits of paid employment, why did you choose to work with this organization?
4. How would you describe your relationship to the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest? Are you an Oregon native? If not, where are you from and where were you living during the Biscuit fire and the post-fire controversy?
5. What aspects of the post-fire salvage logging decisions were of interest to your organization? How did your organization define or describe the post-fire salvage logging controversy?
6. How did your organization arrive at policy, public relations, and ideological positions on the salvage logging controversies? What kinds of discussions about this position-taking did the organizational members have, were these open to the public, and how did the organization make decisions about their official position?
7. Was your organization influenced by other organizations, such as national or international groups or affiliations? If so, how was your organization influenced financially, ideologically, and in their policy position?
8. What does the forest mean to you? What was the purpose of the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest? What was threatened by the controversial salvage logging sales?
9. According to your organization, what were appropriate and inappropriate roles, activities, and practices for humans in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest?
10. According to your organization, was there a legitimate place for logging or economic activity in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest? If so, which economic activities were acceptable and why? Which were not and why?
11. With which organizations did your organization have supportive alliances? With which organizations did your organization have tensions? How would you describe these alliances? How would you describe these tensions? How did organizations work together? How did organizations with tension express this or counter each other?
12. How did your organization identify which political actions to take in response to the salvage logging sales?

13. How did your organization choose which political actions to take in response to the salvage logging sales? How did they assign and determine distribute responsibility for taking these actions within the organization?
14. Why did your organization choose particular political actions in response to the salvage logging sales? Which actions were considered but not chosen, and why? Which actions were considered outside of the scope of your organization?
15. What were the goals of the particular actions chosen? What were the specific indicators, measureable outcomes, and symbolic changes that your organization used to determine success or failure? Did your organization consider these goals to be met? Why or why not? Did you consider those goals to be met by the organization? Why or why not?
16. Which organizations seemed to have successful political actions that appeared to meet the goals of their organization? Why? Which organizations did not seem to have successful political actions? Why?
17. Did your organization consider their political actions successful? Why or why not? Did you find your organization's political actions to be successful? Why or why not?
18. What was the problem or problems your organization mobilized around? Did you agree or disagree with your organization's assessment of the problem and the chosen course of action? Why or why not? If not, how would you have described the problem differently, and how would you have acted differently?
19. Do you think your organization's approach to the problem, as you have just described it, and to the chosen course of action could be used again for future forest management controversies? Would this be considered a useful model for other, similar organizations in the Pacific Northwest?
20. How do you think your organization was portrayed in the media coverage of the controversy? Do you think the coverage was helpful or hurtful to your organization's goals?
21. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the outcome of the salvage logging controversy? Why or why not?
22. Did your participation in the salvage logging controversy make you more or less inclined to participate in another, similar controversy in the future?

## **Appendix D**

### **Lawsuits Filed Against the USFS and BLM (Used under fair use)**

1) American Forest Resources Council

Case number: CV 04-6221-HO

Resolution: Filed in July 2004, dismissed on Mar. 2, 2005

Source: <http://www.nationalaglawcenter.org/assets/caseindexes/forestry.html>)

2) Siskiyou Regional Education Project & The Wilderness Society

Case number(s): CV 04-3058-CO (Siskiyou). The Wilderness Society case also went by CV 04-3060-CO, but when they were consolidated Siskiyou was named as the "lead case".

Resolution: "For the foregoing reasons, plaintiffs' motion for temporary restraining order and/or preliminary injunction [#7], treated as a motion for preliminary injunction, is granted to the extent provided herein." Issued on August 3, 2004.

Source: [http://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=9464019890553553642&q=04-3058-CO&hl=en&as\\_sdt=2,14](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=9464019890553553642&q=04-3058-CO&hl=en&as_sdt=2,14)

3) Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics

Case number: CV 04-3061-CO

Resolution: "Based on the analysis set forth at pages 26-30 of the order dated August 3RD, 2004 filed in the consolidated cases, plaintiff's motion for temporary restraining order [#5], construed as a motion for preliminary injunction, is granted to the extent provided therein." Issued on August 3, 2004.

Source: [http://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=662921513127877738&q=04-3058-CO&hl=en&as\\_sdt=2,14](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=662921513127877738&q=04-3058-CO&hl=en&as_sdt=2,14)

4) Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

Case number: CV 04-3077-CO

Resolution: "In conclusion, I ADOPT the Magistrate's Findings and Recommendation (doc. 55) that plaintiff's motion for summary judgment (doe. 17) is denied, and defendant's motion to dismiss, or in the alternative for summary judgment (doc. 24), is granted. Further, plaintiff's motion for preliminary injunction (doe. 40) is denied." The judge filed on July 15, 2005, but the top of the case says October 2005.

Source:

[http://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=5315021847711694364&q=%22Civ+04-3077-CO%22&hl=en&as\\_sdt=2,14](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=5315021847711694364&q=%22Civ+04-3077-CO%22&hl=en&as_sdt=2,14)

5) Cascadia Wildlands Project

Case number: CV 04-1424-HO

Resolution: "For the foregoing reasons, plaintiffs' motion for preliminary injunction [#11] is denied." Issued December 20, 2004

Source: [http://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=9235745406693724622&hl=en&as\\_sdt=2&as\\_vis=1&oi=scholar](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=9235745406693724622&hl=en&as_sdt=2&as_vis=1&oi=scholar)

6) California et.al.

Case number: C-05-3508 EDL

Resolution: "For all these reasons, Plaintiffs' motions for summary judgment are granted and Defendants' motion is denied. The State Petitions Rule is set aside and the Roadless

Rule, including the Tongass Amendment, is reinstated. Defendants are enjoined from taking any further action contrary to the Roadless Rule without undertaking environmental analysis consistent with this opinion." Issued October 11, 2006

Source: [http://www.leagle.com/decision/20061333459FSupp2d874\\_11257.xml/docbase/CSLWAR2-1986-2006result/?xmlidoc/20061333459FSupp2d874\\_11257.xml/docbase/CSLWAR2-1986-2006](http://www.leagle.com/decision/20061333459FSupp2d874_11257.xml/docbase/CSLWAR2-1986-2006result/?xmlidoc/20061333459FSupp2d874_11257.xml/docbase/CSLWAR2-1986-2006)

7) Cascadia Wildlands Project

Case number: Unable to find this

Resolution: "Plaintiff has not demonstrated any genuine chance of success on the merits. Accordingly, Plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction and temporary restraining order (docket # 3) is denied. Plaintiffs' motion to waive the injunction bond (# 4) is denied as moot." Issued June 21, 2006

Source:[http://or.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.20060621\\_0000331.DOR.htm/qx](http://or.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.20060621_0000331.DOR.htm/qx)